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19th annual report

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19th annual report

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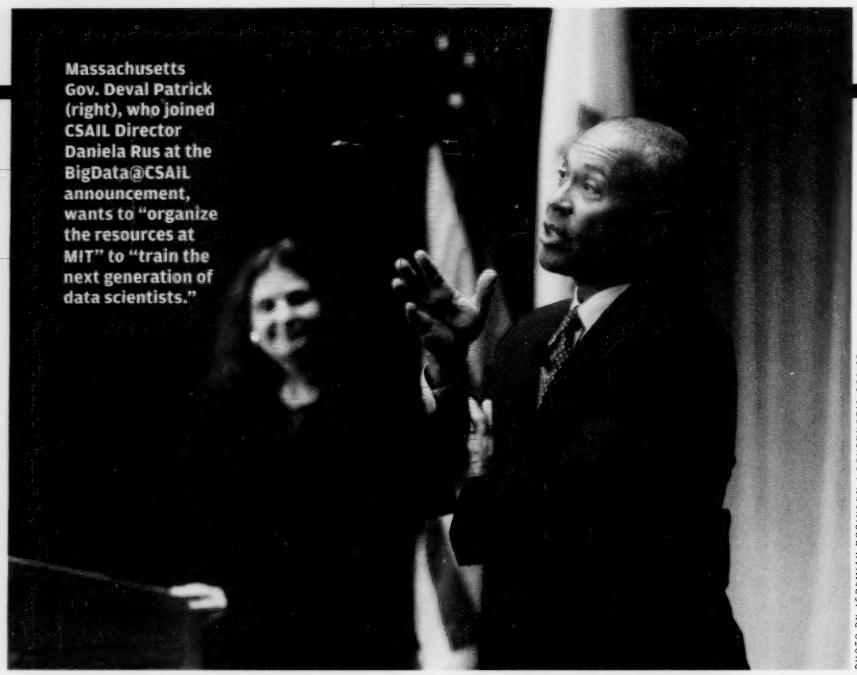
Fresh Insights
New Trends
Great Ideas

Heads Up



Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick (right), who joined CSAIL Director Daniela Rus at the BigData@CSAIL announcement, wants to "organize the resources at MIT" to "train the next generation of data scientists."

PHOTO BY JEREMIAH ROBINSON / GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

BIG DATA

Mass. Joins MIT, Intel to Tackle Big Data

WITH SEVERAL big-data initiatives announced at MIT recently, Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick said he wants to make his state a hub for research into that emerging field.

"We'll organize the resources at MIT to advance research and train the next generation of data scientists," Patrick said.

In one big-data-related move at the Cambridge, Mass.-based university, the MIT Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory (CSAIL) announced a program called BigData@CSAIL, whose goal will be to make sense of vast amounts of data generated in industries such as financial services, healthcare and social media.

In another, Intel said it plans to establish a big-data research center at MIT. The chip maker will provide $2.5 million per year in funding for up to five years for the new facility, known as the Intel Science and Technology Center (ISTC) at CSAIL.

The ISTC will be headed by MIT adjunct professor Samuel Madden, who said the program's goal is to "build software tools that scale beyond what conventional software programs, like relational databases, can do."

In a big-data project of his own, Madden developed technology called CarTel that uses sensors in cars to capture information about road conditions and traffic. One system uses accelerometers in mobile phones to record the location of potholes and then geotags and maps the sites.

Patrick said the Massachusetts big-data push will be a multistep process that includes a matching grants program and internships.

– Nick Barber, IDG News Service

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SECURITY

Google Warns of 'State-Sponsored' Hack Attacks

Over the past few weeks, Google has begun warning people who use its Gmail service whenever it suspects that they might be targets of 'state-sponsored' hack attacks.

To do so, the company puts a message that says "We believe state-sponsored attackers may be attempting to compromise your account or computer" at the top of the Gmail pages of users that it believes are at risk.

The message will pop up in any browser, not just Google's Chrome.

Google has been coy about how it knows whether a specific individual has been targeted by attacks.

"We can't go into the details without giving away information that would be helpful to these bad actors," wrote Eric Grosse, Google's vice president of security engineering, in a blog.

But the company says it knows a state-sponsored attack when it sees one. "Our detailed analysis – as well as victim reports – strongly suggest the involvement of states or groups that are state-sponsored," Grosse said.

Google's ability to recognize such an attack may come from past experience. The company was victimized by Chinese hackers more than two years ago, and it has had to clean up several large-scale phishing and hacking campaigns directed at Gmail users.

– GREGG KEIZER

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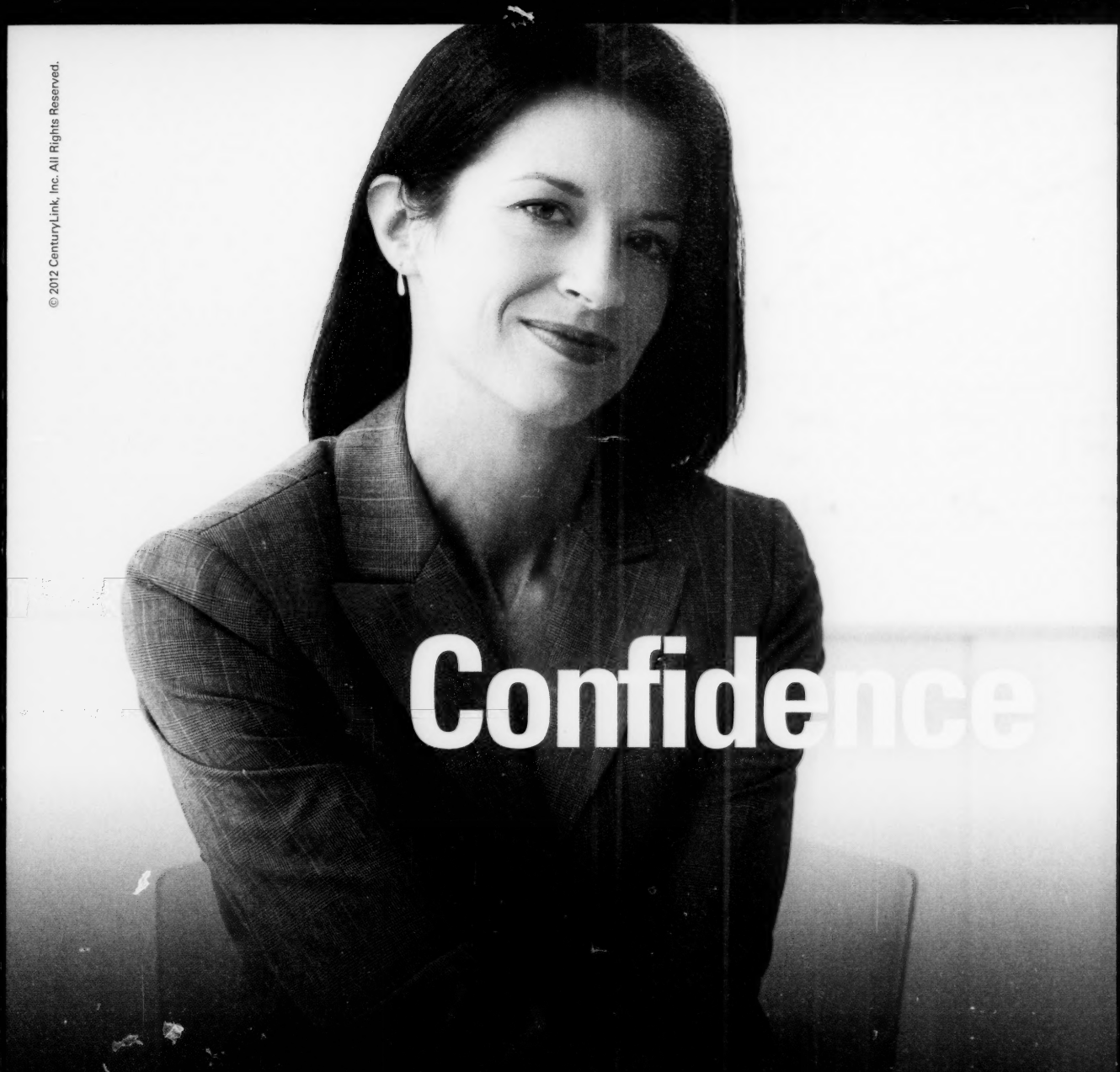

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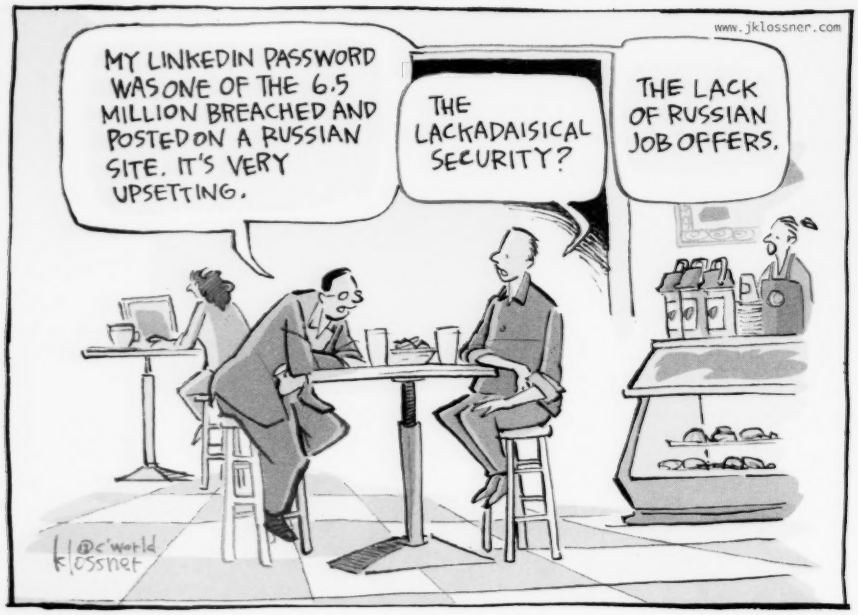
By John Klossner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IT INDUSTRY

HP CEO Reassures Users as Cuts Loom

AS HP CEO MEG WHITMAN took the stage at this month's HP Discover conference in Las Vegas, the thousands sitting in the cavernous hall applauded politely — and then stopped.

It was Whitman's first appearance at this conference. She faced an audience of people who run systems that make sure airplanes fly on time and banking systems never fail.

Typically, attendees at HP Discover conferences are after the latest product information or want to see how their peers are handling problems similar to their own. But these days, they have more on their minds. They want to know what changes are in store as HP plans to cut 27,000 jobs, or about 8% of its workforce, over the next two years. They also have questions about the Itanium chip, which is the subject of a lawsuit.

One IT manager, who didn't want his name used, said HP has assigned about 45 people to provide sales and technical support to his company. One of the things he wanted to accomplish at the conference was to find out about the "continuity of the technical support" in the wake of the layoffs. He learned that around 25% of the HP staffers assigned to his company might "turn over," or be affected by the layoff in some way.

Whitman, who took the CEO job last September after her predecessor, Leo Apotheker, was shown the door, tried to reassure HP's customer base. "The kind of turmoil that HP has had at the top of the company can take a toll on companies, employees, shareholders," she said. "But I've been surprised at the resilience of HP people."

Leon Arens, another attendee, runs HP NonStop systems at a financial services firm. The fault-tolerant systems use the embattled Itanium chip, and he said that's a bigger concern than the layoffs. There's "too much" on that platform that's mission-critical, and swapping it out even five years from now "would be crazy," he said.

– Patrick Thibodeau

Micro Burst

Google estimates that more than

900,000

Android-based mobile devices are activated each day.

SOURCE: GOOGLE

CYBERWARFARE

Experts Show How 'Flame' Fakes Windows

Security researchers have published detailed information about how Flame malware spreads through a network by exploiting Microsoft's Windows Update mechanism.

Their findings answer a key question: How could Flame infect fully patched Windows 7 machines?

They learned that hackers had located and exploited a flaw in Microsoft's Terminal Services licensing certificate authority that allowed them to generate code-validating certificates "signed" by Microsoft.

Armed with fake certificates, attackers could fool a Windows 7 PC into accepting a malicious file as a Microsoft update.

But Flame doesn't really compromise Windows Update. And it doesn't infiltrate the service to feed malicious files to unsuspecting users. Instead, a rogue configuration file modifies a machine's settings to route all traffic through the Flame-infected system, creating a complex mechanism for spreading the malware.

"This is one of the most interesting and complex malicious programs we have ever seen," wrote Alexander Gostev, leader of the research and analysis team at Moscow-based Kaspersky Lab, in a blog entry.

Microsoft has taken steps to stop the spoofing of Windows Update.

– GREGG KEIZER

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IT Execs Advised To Be Contrarians

Computerworld Honors laureates urge IT pros to innovate and take risks – even if it means putting their careers on the line. **By Jaikumar Vijayan**

JASON PALMER has some straightforward advice for IT executives who are looking to get more value from technology: Be a contrarian.

"Always challenge what you think will work; always challenge what you have done," said Palmer, president of SmartDrive Systems, at the *Computerworld* Honors Program awards gala at the Andrew W. Mellon auditorium in Washington earlier this month. "This allows you to think outside the box and identify opportunities that you wouldn't have expected."

SmartDrive Systems, a provider of fuel management and driver safety services to motor vehicle fleet operators, was one of dozens of organizations recognized for using information technologies in innovative ways to promote public welfare.

Organizations that received 21st Century Achievement Awards, the program's highest honor, included DataDyne, for developing a free data collection tool for nonprofit and humanitarian organizations; Curriki, for creating an online community that provides free educational materials to students and educators around the world; OhioHealth, for a mobile application that delivers real-time healthcare information via smartphones; and the Pennsylvania Justice Network, for developing an innovative facial recognition tool for use in law enforcement.

LinkedIn founder Reid Hoffman received the Honors Program's Morgan Stanley Leadership Award for Global Commerce. In remarks to attendees, he stressed the importance of entrepreneurial thinking in a fast-changing world. Companies looking to create jobs and make a difference in society increasingly need to think and behave like entrepreneurs — and that means they need to take risks, he said.

That advice resonated with several IT executives and other attendees.

"Over 20 years and six separate startups, I have found that it is critical that you look at changing market dynamics and at how current processes can be improved with technology," Palmer said.

Shyam Desigan, the chief financial officer at Volunteers of America Chesapeake, said taking innovative and entrepreneurial risks has been important for the nonprofit charity during challenging economic times.

The organization was recognized at the Honors Program ceremony for building a predictive analytics tool to help identify new service opportunities.

"The only way for organizations to survive and thrive is be innovative and entrepreneurial," Desigan said. "When people say 'no' or 'can't be done on this budget,' I look [for creative solutions like] leveraging cloud computing and open source to drive incremental change."

Alluding to an old IT adage, Desigan noted that it was once believed that CIOs would never get fired for buying products and services from high-tech giants like IBM or Cisco. But times are changing, he said, because "CFOs like myself are increasingly looking for value."

Lou August, global co-leader of technology development at World Vision International, said that a lot of the work done by the charitable organization is entrepreneurial in nature, whether it involves creating new technology-enabled programs or building technology-enabled social ventures.

World Vision was recognized for developing an innovative mobile tool designed to track aid distribution.

"As the founder and owner of a technology company for 20 years, I believe entrepreneurial skills are essential for an IT leader," August said.

IT leaders must also be willing to take risks, even ones that could put their careers on the line. "This willingness is tied to one's passion," said August. "Achieving a vision one is passionate about is always more valuable than one's career itself." ◆

> "The only way for organizations to survive and thrive is be innovative and entrepreneurial. — CFO, VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA CHESAPEAKE

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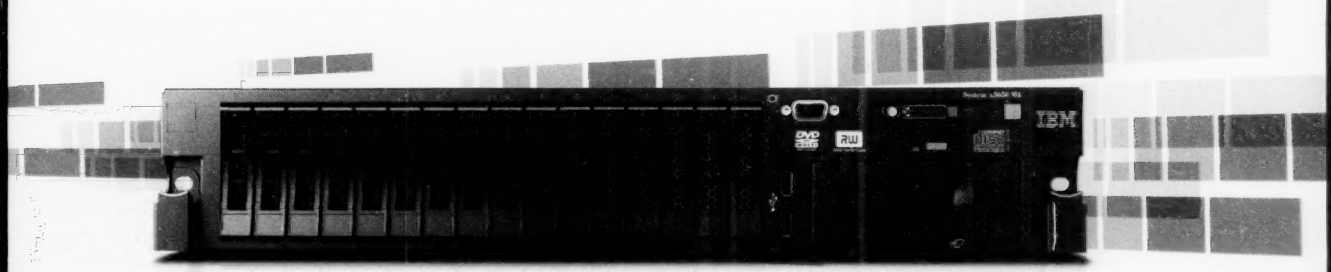

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[1]TBR Report – "IBM System x® x86 servers: Meeting the demands of today's enterprises by combining value and support," January 2012.
[2]Source: Intel® Performance comparison using SPECfp_rate_base2006 benchmark Baseline score of 267 on prior generation 2S Intel® Xeon® processor X5690 (3.46 GHz, 6 core, 12 MB L3, 6.4 GT/s, 130 W) based platform published at www.spec.org as of Sept. 6, 2011. Estimated new score of 486 on 2S Intel® Xeon® processor E5-2690 (2.90 GHz, 8 core, 20 MB L3, 8.0 GT/s, 135 W) platform is based on Intel internal measured estimates as of Sept. 6, 2011, using two Intel® Xeon® processors E5-2690, Turbo Enabled, EIST Enabled, Hyper-Threading Enabled, 64 GB memory (8x8 GB DDR3-1600), Red Hat Enterprise Linux Server 6.1 beta for x86_6, Intel® Compiler 12.1.
[3]x3650 M4 supports up to 768 GB of memory using 32 GB LRDIMMs in 24 memory slots. Previous generation x3650 M3 supports up to 192 GB of memory.
[4]Ships with four 1 GB Ethernet ports standard and supports integrated slot-less 10 GB Ethernet with Virtual Fabric. Previous generation server includes two 1 GB Ethernet slots and requires use of a PCI Express slot to support 10 GB Ethernet.
[5]Global Financing offerings are provided through IBM Credit LLC in the United States and other IBM subsidiaries and divisions worldwide to qualified commercial and government customers. Monthly payments provided are for planning purposes only and may vary based on your credit and other factors; please contact your IBM Global Financing Representative for actual monthly amounts. Lease offer provided is based on an FMV lease of 36 monthly payments. Other restrictions may apply. Rates and offerings are subject to change, extension or withdrawal without notice.
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BYOD Exposes Perils Of Cloud Storage

IT managers hope stricter policies and new security tools will help keep corporate data off of insecure clouds. By Lucas Mearian

THE DANGERS of using consumer cloud storage systems became clearer earlier this month, when a hacker claimed that he accessed presidential candidate Mitt Romney's Dropbox storage and email accounts using an easily cracked password.

The apparent hack of Romney's accounts came on the heels of IBM's rollout of a bring-your-own-device (BYOD) policy that bans the use of Dropbox due to concerns that hackers could easily access sensitive information stored there.

Such examples make it clear that it's risky to keep corporate data on consumer-oriented cloud storage systems, say IT executives and analysts.

"IBM has the world's biggest BYOD program, and they just locked down Evernote and Dropbox because they discovered their future product plans and all sorts of really sensitive data was being beamed automatically out to these services," said Dion Hinchcliffe, an executive vice president at IT consulting firm Dachis Group.

Though companies are increasingly tightening their BYOD policies, most have yet to address the use of consumer apps and services such as cloud storage on mobile devices.

"Cloud data centers are becoming high-value targets" of data thieves, said Hinchcliffe, raising the possibility that "someone inside the company with the keys to the castle" could be bribed to share data with hackers. "There's a lot of temptation," he added.

Dave Malcom, chief information security officer at Hyatt Hotels, said he's keenly aware that employees are using consumer-grade cloud storage services with mobile devices on the job, and he's taking steps to address the situation.

For instance, the hotel chain is surveying employee workstations to determine whether cloud storage apps like Dropbox have been downloaded and, if so, what data is stored on them.

If a cloud storage app has been downloaded, "there's probably a corresponding machine they're placing documents on that we don't own," Malcom said. "We're starting to get in front of it [and] we're trying to provide a corporately blessed service."

Among other things, Hyatt's BYOD policy requires employees to register mobile devices, and it prohibits the storage of confidential data outside the corporate firewall. The company also makes no bones about the fact that it remotely wipes all data from lost or stolen devices.

Nonetheless, "we're not naive enough to believe that a policy alone is the answer, and that we don't need technology" to help people follow the rules, said Malcom. "We want our employees to do the right things, but we know there may be times that they don't have the tools."

Malcom said that he hopes to start pushing employees toward using a corporate SharePoint system for content-sharing, though he acknowledges that it's not user-friendly on an iPad.

"If we can find someone like a Box.net that we can enter into an enterprise agreement with and help reduce some liability, we'd like to offer [that] to our user community," he said.

He noted that Hyatt is also trying to strengthen its passwords to avoid Romney's fate: "Ultimately, I'd like to get to biometrics or RFID proximity cards where you just have a four-digit PIN along with your card or your fingerprint in order to get on to our systems." ◆

> "IBM has the world's biggest BYOD program, and they just locked down Evernote and Dropbox because they discovered their future product plans and all sorts of really sensitive data was being beamed automatically out to these services."
>
> EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, DACHIS GROUP

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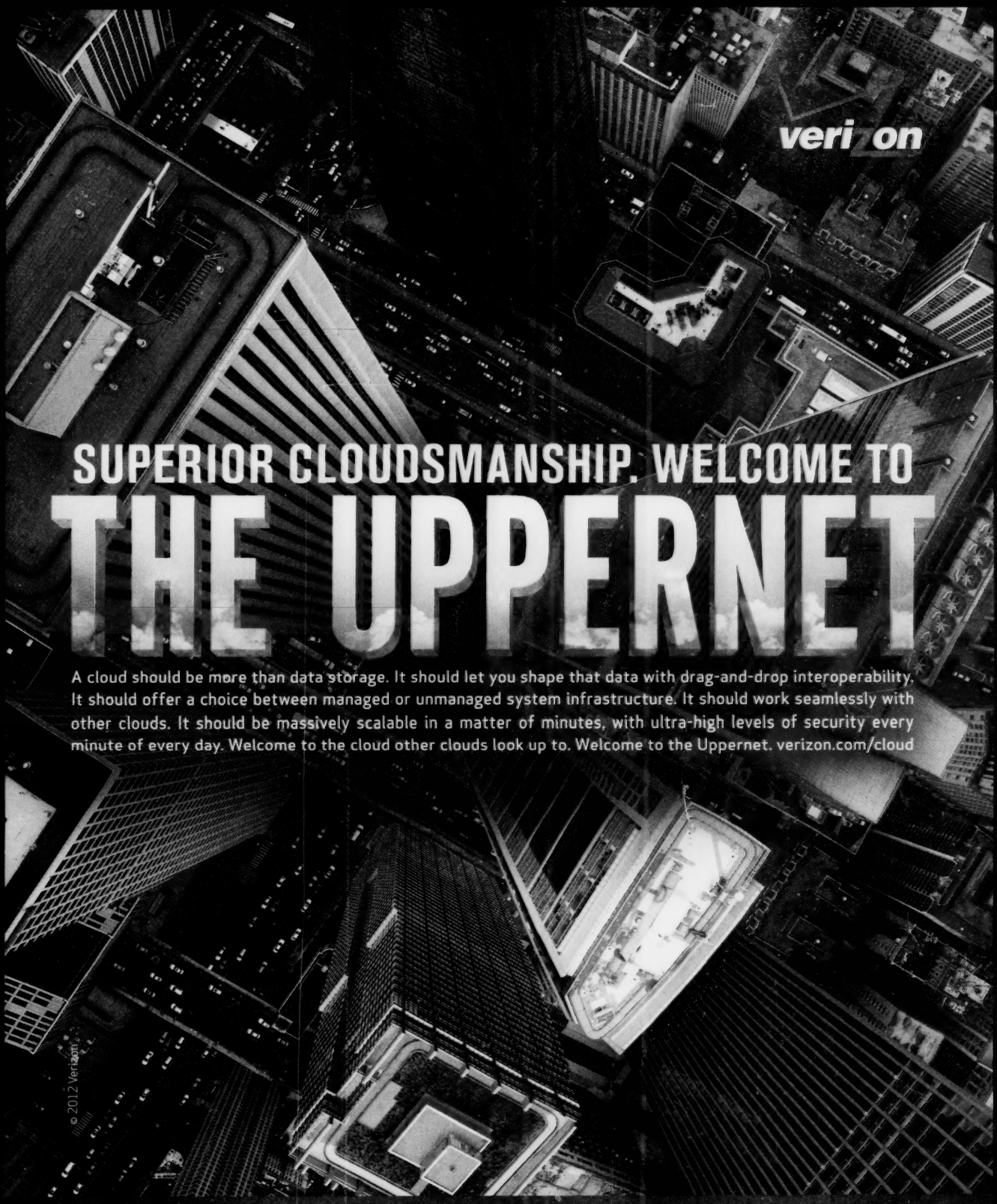
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THE Grill

Scott Hicar

DigitalGlobe's CIO explains how Earth imagery can solve a multitude of business problems.

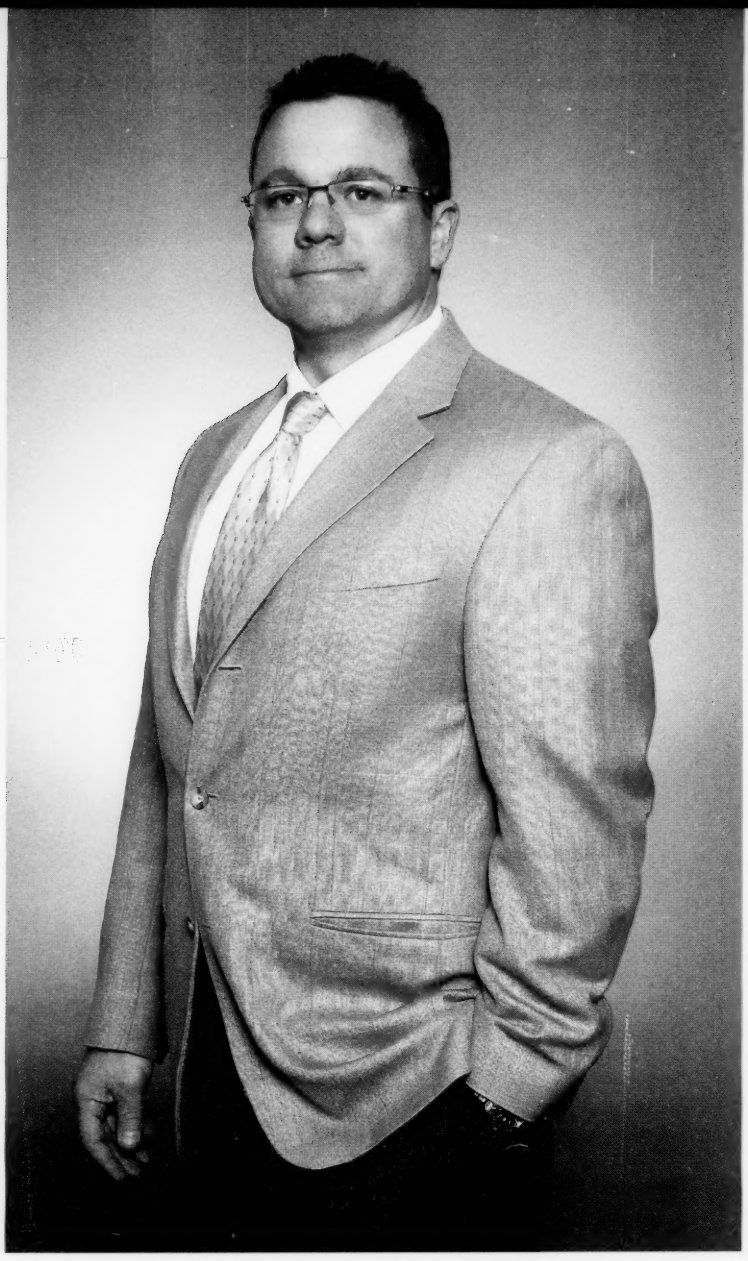
Favorite technology: The digital video recorder is the most wonderful technology innovation of the last 20 years. With replay, watching football is a totally different experience.

iPhone, Android or BlackBerry? BlackBerry, because my fingers are too fat to type on an iPhone.

First job: Scooping ice cream at Baskin-Robbins. A great opportunity to be in front of customers, but not good for the waistline.

Off-hours pastime: Mountain biking. When I'm not working, I'm out there somewhere in the Colorado mountains.

Favorite movie: My favorite comedy is *Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy.*



SCOTT HICAR *has a big-data problem. Every year, the DigitalGlobe CIO must find room for another petabyte or two of the imagery that streams from his company's three Earth-imaging satellites. And the scope of that task is going to grow: A fourth satellite is under construction. Processing that data is a massive challenge, as is the task of delivering ever larger volumes to customers, who use DigitalGlobe images for everything from assessing storm damage to providing location-based mobile services. But it's worth the effort: DigitalGlobe helped emergency teams take stock of the devastation in Japan after the April 2011 earthquake and tsunami — an undertaking that earned the company recognition as a 2012* Computerworld *Honors laureate. Here, Hicar talks about how big data is becoming an "immovable object" and why DigitalGlobe is betting on the cloud.*

What challenges did you face in processing and distributing data to Japanese emergency responders after the earthquake and tsunami? We worked with Hitachi

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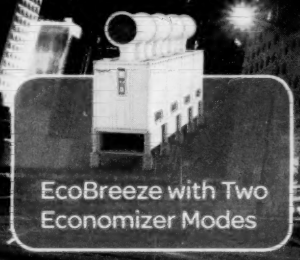

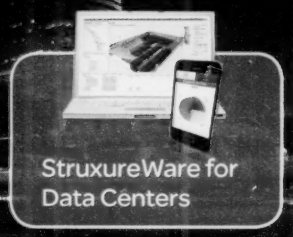

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> **Data is becoming an immovable object.** It will be easier to bring the computations to the data than to bring the data to the computations.

Defense and targeted our satellites. First responders could see an impact assessment within two hours of the event so they could start to plan. Two years ago, that capability was possible [only] for special circumstances like that event; otherwise, our average load times were in the 12-hour time frame. Now we can take an image from a satellite, downlink it to a ground station, get it back here to Colorado, process it and have it available online in our cloud in under two hours, on average.

What role does IT play in DigitalGlobe's business model? As the leading provider of Earth imagery content and analysis, we are a digital company creating digital products, so IT has a very broad role. We have a network of ground terminals around the world that take information from our satellites, and we provide the telecommunications infrastructure to get that massive amount of content here to our processing facility. We receive 2 to 2.5 petabytes of raw imagery a year from our satellites, we have about 8 petabytes of fresh content on spinning disk, and we have an archive of over 2 million square kilometers of imagery that represents seven or eight years of active collections of the planet.

We decompress that, process it, and ship out 15 to 20 petabytes of imagery per year to our customers. Most recently, we're putting it into our geospatial cloud to make it available on a much more real-time basis.

What's involved in processing that data? We stretch the images across an elevation model of the Earth to make sure that they're accurate. We cancel out the angle of the camera that the image was taken from; we cancel out the bumpiness of the Earth; we correct for the wobble associated with the gravitational pull of the moon and what that pull means to the tides. All of those things need to be corrected. It's a massive computational problem to create accurate imagery.

What role does analytics play in your business and IT operations? We use analytics to keep our images current, to determine where we need to refresh next. Cities with a high rate of change are high on this list because our customers use our imagery to reset car navigation systems.

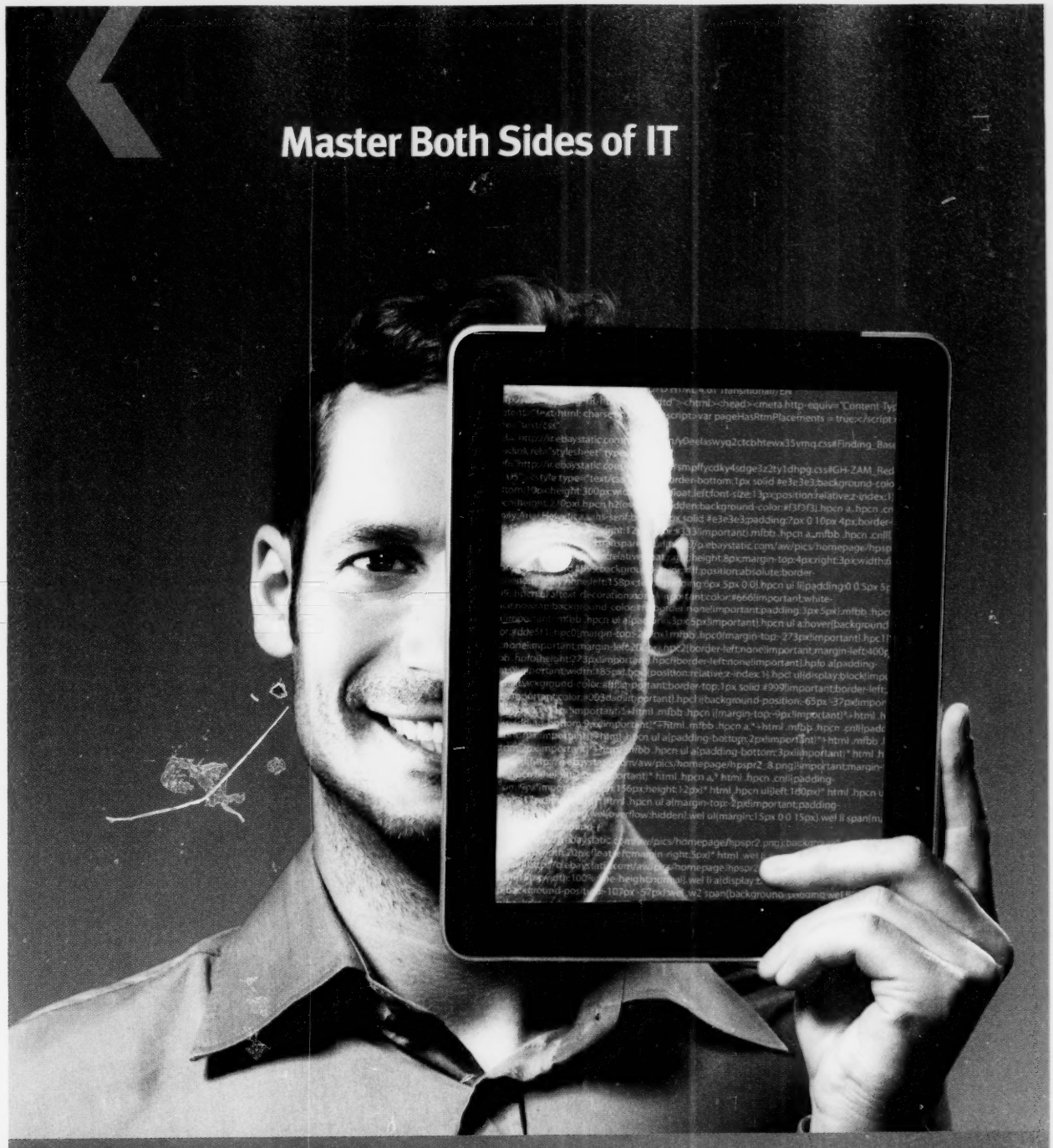
What unique challenges does IT face in meeting the needs of your industry and business? It's the big-data problem. We process massive amounts of imagery, and we need to meet very exact timelines. So the challenge is how to create a flexible computing model that lets us create the right product for the customer. We created our own high-performance compute cluster, and we are actively harnessing the power of graphics processing units to do this. By moving processing from CPUs to GPUs, we have seen anywhere from a 10- to 20-times improvement in speed.

Today we have somewhere around 20 petabytes of data between spinning disk and tape. In the future, customers will no longer be able to [receive] all of the data they need to answer a problem. The data is becoming an immovable object. So we're going to create in our cl d an opportunity for customers to bring us their computations, which we can then run on our high-performance computing environment. It will be easier to bring the computations to the data than to bring the data to the computations.

Can you discuss some of the mobile projects you're exploring? We have a customer that provides location-based services through an online navigation portal, and they want to make our images accessible to their mobile customers. If you're looking at imagery through a phone or online, it comes back in little squares, or tiles. To create this ability to tile out the entire globe and serve it to mobile customers requires somewhere in the neighborhood of 42 billion tiles. We put that into our high-performance computing cluster, and we are in the process of finishing up delivery of those 42 billion tiles.

What do you find most frustrating about your industry? Our information, our content and our analytics can solve business problems that are very broad-based across many industries. But other corporations don't understand how much value can be generated from satellite imagery, how many problems can be solved in a way that's more cost-effective than a traditional solution for gathering information. We're watching and waiting for that to emerge. We see leading innovators using these solutions. But we're not yet in what I'd call the middle of the market in some of these areas.

– *Interview by* **Robert L. Mitchell**



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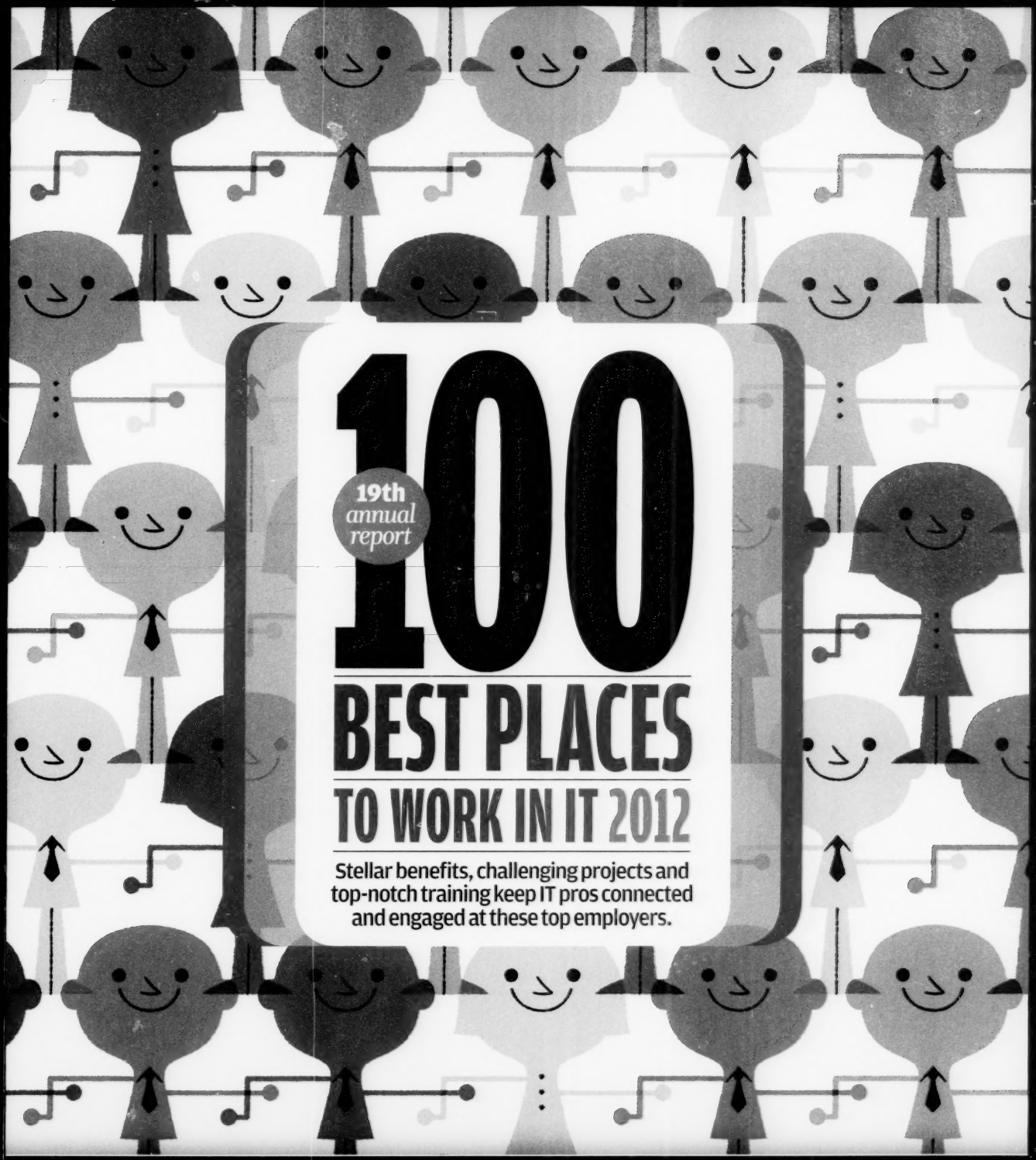

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LUCE PINOSA ILLUSTRATION

» **CIO Greg Schwartz** (left) with IT team members Josh Leonard, Seth Ethington, Lisette Guerra, Lyndsay Yerbic, Mark Thompson, Annette York, Elena Vaquera, Will McDowell and Matt Hecke.

NO.

USAA

A day spent with several IT staffers at USAA reveals a supportive work environment, great amenities and a commitment to innovation. BY JULIA KING

FOR THE THIRD YEAR RUNNING, USAA has earned the No. 1 spot on *Computerworld*'s Best Places to Work in IT list. There's little wonder why. The $19 billion, privately held insurance and financial services company

USAA

is growing at a rate of 8% annually and has made its ongoing investment in IT talent a cornerstone of its success. In fact, CIO Greg Schwartz says USAA has "a very aggressive plan" to hire more IT workers over the next six years.

Launch a career here — USAA tries to sell IT professionals on *careers*, not *jobs* — and you'll enjoy extraordinary pay and benefits, including 26 days of paid vacation after a year on the payroll, an annual holiday bonus equal to two weeks' base pay, health insurance subsidized at a rate of up to 87.5%, an 8% employer match on 401(k) contributions and an annual performance bonus that this year equaled 18.4% of worker salaries — it was the second highest in the company's history and was equal to last year's payout. On average, USAA's 2,157 IT employees work between 41 and 45 hours a week. The culture is simultaneously innovation-focused, conservative and family-friendly. Brigham Young University's campuses in Idaho and Utah are key recruiting centers.

"There are a lot of great benefits here, but there's a lot of hard work that goes on," says Schwartz. "We really have a culture of high performance."

The bottom line: "We believe that people should be paid well and have great benefits, but we expect a lot out of them."

Here's a peek at a day in the life of some of the IT workers at USAA's San Antonio headquarters.

5:05 a.m. Annette York, 47, arrives at one of three USAA fitness centers for her daily, hourlong workout. By 7:00 a.m., she will have showered and changed and headed upstairs to her job leading a 200-person team and the delivery of an $80 million portfolio of software projects.

"The fitness center is a must in my life," says the 26-year USAA veteran. Exercising daily also helps whittle down the amount York personally pays for health insurance. USAA subsidizes 82.5% of all employees' medical coverage, but it also chips in another 5% for those who take action to improve or maintain their health.

The daily workouts may be routine for York, but her IT career at USAA has been anything but that. Hired as a developer fresh out of college, she has moved through business analyst and project management roles to IT planning and now into management.

She acknowledges that she wasn't sure what she wanted to do when she joined the company in 1986. "But there are so many opportunities here that you can change your career if you want," she says. "You don't have to leave to have a different experience."

7:30 a.m. Mark Thompson, a technology architect in USAA's agile development lab for business intelligence, is getting his 20-month-old son, Caden, settled in at the on-campus child development center. Located in a sunlit building fronted by a garden where begonias and snapdragons bloom, the center can accommodate up to 300 children between the ages of 6 months and 5 years, and it employs 75 teachers.

» **Technology architect Mark Thompson** with his 20-month-old son, Caden, at USAA's on-site child development center.

Thompson, 32, graduated from college with a degree in computer science. While working full time at USAA, he earned a master's degree in technology management from the University of Texas at San Antonio, tapping the company's $10,000-a-year education benefit to pay for graduate school.

"I took advantage of the funding to pay for courses and books, but I also had the advantage of a management team that was very receptive and supportive of the fact that I was in school. If they understood I was coming up on a big exam, they would figure that into

» **Driving innovation** is a top priority for CIO Greg Schwartz.

my workload," Thompson explains.

9:15 a.m. Matthew Hecke, a lead network engineer, is gearing up for a treadmill test in the fitness center — part of a free annual health assessment he scheduled for himself. The fitness evaluations are another way employees can earn "healthy points" to reduce medical insurance premiums.

Hecke joined USAA four years ago, moving to San Antonio from Arkansas with his wife and two children. USAA helped find him a real estate agent and paid his moving expenses — including the cost of having movers pack up his belongings. Now, he's a regular user of the fitness centers and plays softball and basketball on USAA intramural teams.

> **There are a lot of great benefits here, but there's a lot of hard work that goes on. We really have a culture of high performance.**
>
> GREG SCHWARTZ, CIO, USAA

Over the coming weekend, he will travel to San Francisco, where he will visit one of USAA's technology vendors to get a peek at its product road map. "Researching new technologies is one of my favorite parts of the job," he says.

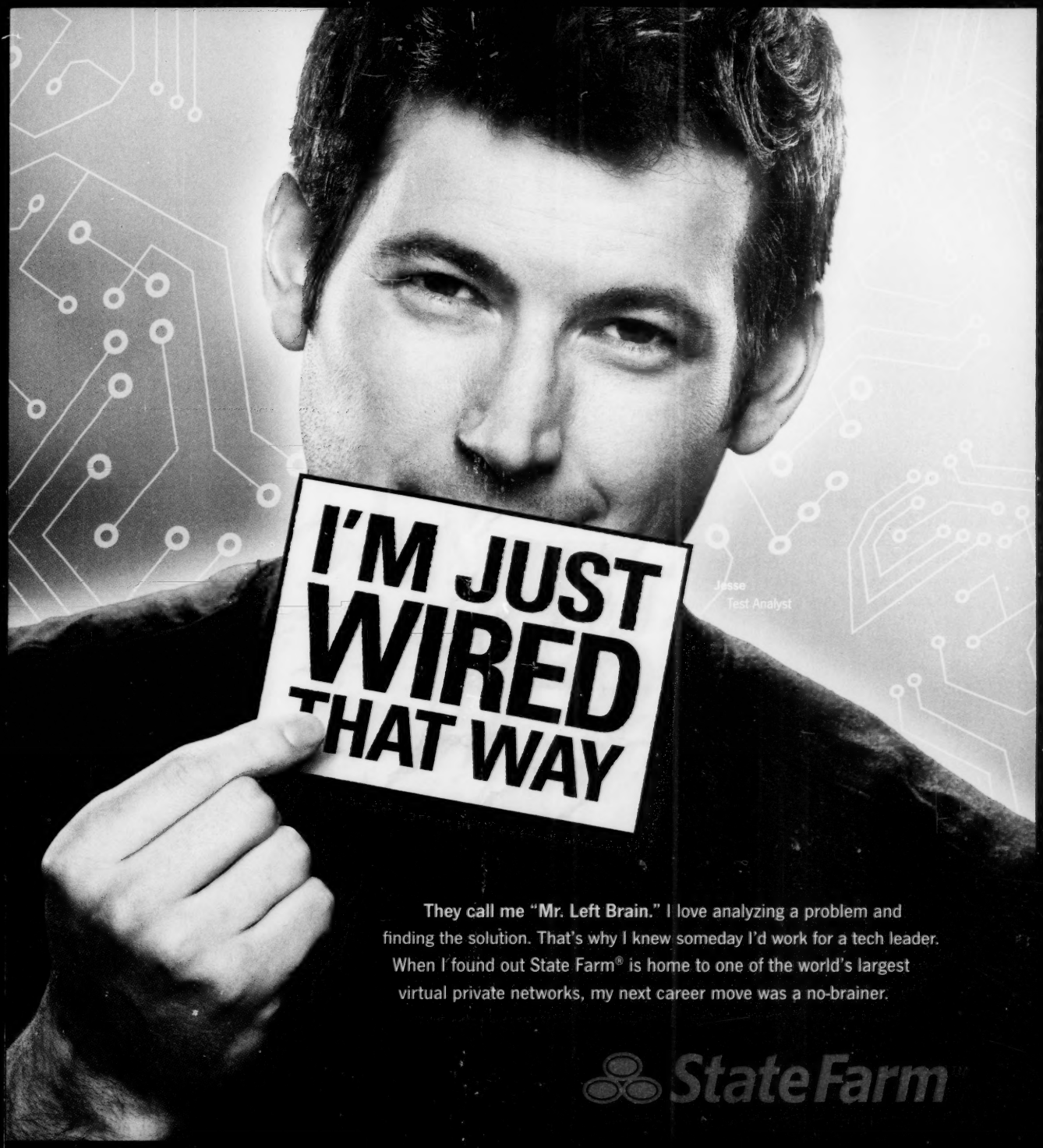
9:30 a.m. There's music playing in the background in Schwartz's office, which is spacious and has an open door. Schwartz's No. 1 priority as CIO is innovation. "We need to continue to find new and even better ways to keep encouraging it," he says.

That means finding a vehicle for innovation that's even better than Tech X, USAA's two-day, in-house IT innovation conference and expo. Featuring more than 100 sessions, Tech X was planned by IT employees and managed by Lisette Guerra, an IT project manager and 12-year USAA veteran who joined the company right out of college.

It also means finding something even better than USAA's wildly popular Code as Ice competitions. Frequently cited by IT employees as a favorite aspect of working at USAA, the 30-day competitions challenge IT staffers to collaborate with business unit employees (on their own time) and design prototype solutions for specific business problems. Last year, 130 employees submitted 31 ideas, five of which were implemented immediately. Another 11 ideas were under development within a year, and six of the ideas were sent directly to USAA's intellectual property team for patent consideration.

Among the 2011 ideas was an Apple iPad app created by a team led by software developer and Georgia Tech graduate Josh Leonard. Using the app, USAA service representatives or customers themselves can graphically re-create and depict the details of car accidents for claims purposes.

Schwartz says he's "especially jazzed" about setting up additional agile development labs, where IT and business unit staffers work together on projects. "We now have 20% of the projects in our portfolio running through labs," he says.



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11 a.m. York stops for coffee at an on-campus Starbucks, which is surrounded by several "foxholes" and "campsites" — rooms designed for small, impromptu meetings. "Wherever we find dead space, we create a collaborative area," she says.

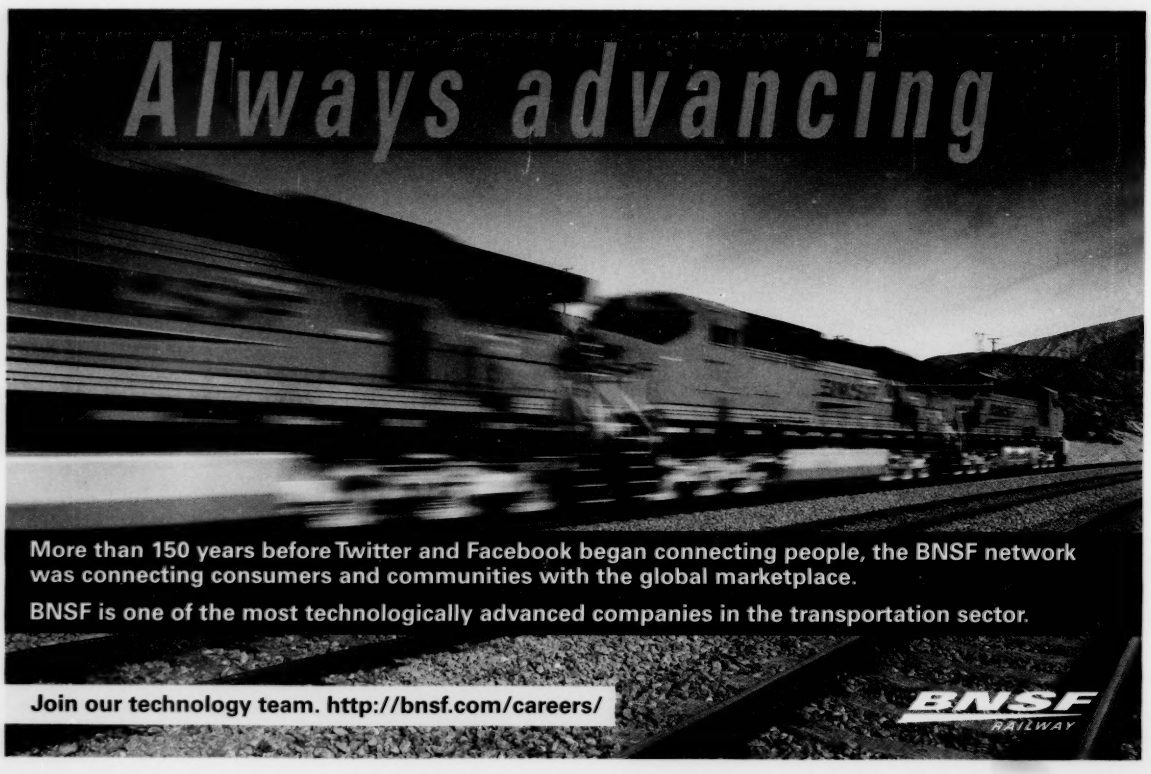
Forgot your wallet? No problem. Employees can charge the snacks and beverages they buy at Starbucks, as well as the cards, gifts or other items they pick up in the on-site store. Their purchases are itemized, with the totals deducted from their paychecks.

1 p.m. The spacious, modern cafeteria, with a wide variety of hot and cold entrees and plated desserts on display, is among the amenities that Will McDowell says he missed most about USAA when he left to take a job at a publicly traded insurance company in the mid-Atlantic region.

"I really missed the campus, and more than anything I missed the team environment," says McDowell, who returned after a year and now is an IT technical director who leads USAA's mobile, social and Internet development teams. "At the other company, IT was more of an order-taking organization. Here, we really work hand in glove with the business, developing strategy and executing against it."

3-5 p.m. Software developer Seth Ethington arrives for an interview with *Computerworld* carrying a written list of the many benefits he personally

» **IT project manager Lisette Guerra** shops on-site during a break from work.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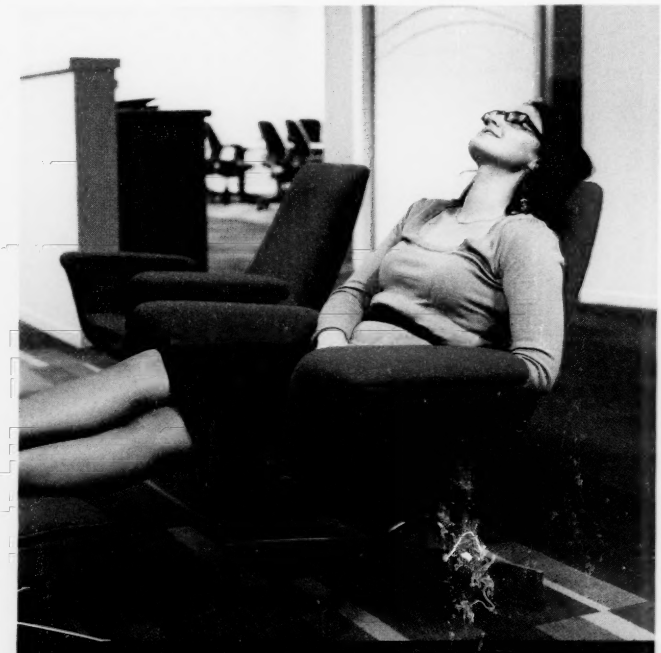

» **Software developer Lyndsay Yerbic** takes a break in a "relax-recharge zone."

values at USAA. At the top are the countless opportunities to innovate.

"The majority of my ideas have either gone into production, so members are seeing changes, or they're on a road map to go into production," says Ethington. USAA also has submitted four of his ideas for patenting.

"Just having the opportunity to go through the patent process is very rewarding," says the 31-year-old father of two. "Financially, it's not something I'd ever be able to do on my own. USAA basically fronted all the money for me to go through the process."

Lyndsay Yerbic, 23, a software developer hired right out of Mesa University in Colorado, also has a written list. The benefit she values most: Nexus, USAA's social network specifically for recently hired college grads. She's a leader in the Nexus community, and she says one of her favorite activities has been coordinating the monthly technology seminars for IT workers.

Through Nexus, Yerbic has met friends, discovered volunteer opportunities and found co-workers with shared interests. She has also picked up tips for getting to know San Antonio and Texas overall.

"I never pictured myself in Texas until I pictured myself at USAA," says the self-described "Colorado girl." ◆

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3 Commonwealth Financial Network

No. 1 for retention, No. 2 for training

The unusually long tenures of IT employees at this financial services company in Waltham, Mass., speak to the firm's support for employee work/life balance. A unique perk for people who have worked at Commonwealth Financial for three years is a free stay at one of the company chairman's vacation homes on Cape Cod or in the Dominican Republic, Las Vegas, Florida or Maine.

4 General Mills Inc.

No. 1 for benefits, No. 6 for training

Employees at this Minneapolis-based food giant value the company's flexible work options and team-oriented, collaborative culture. Nearly half of the IT staffers, from interns up to executives, work in a flexible, open office environment that's designed to promote collaboration because it doesn't have office walls or desk partitions. And IT workers recently developed an internal social network called "Connect," where employees worldwide and at every level engage in conversations on shared topics of interest.

5 Quicken Loans Inc.

No. 5 for career development, No. 6 for retention

This online mortgage lender in Detroit is all about career development, providing every IT employee with an average of 200 hours of technical training per year, a comprehensive career plan, and the opportunity to participate in a leadership training program. Tech employees can also take advantage of "Bullet Time" – a period of four hours per week when they can work on personal projects. Bullet Time efforts have yielded a mobile app that allows team members to locate conference rooms and an internal streaming video site affectionately called Qtube.

6 Verizon Wireless

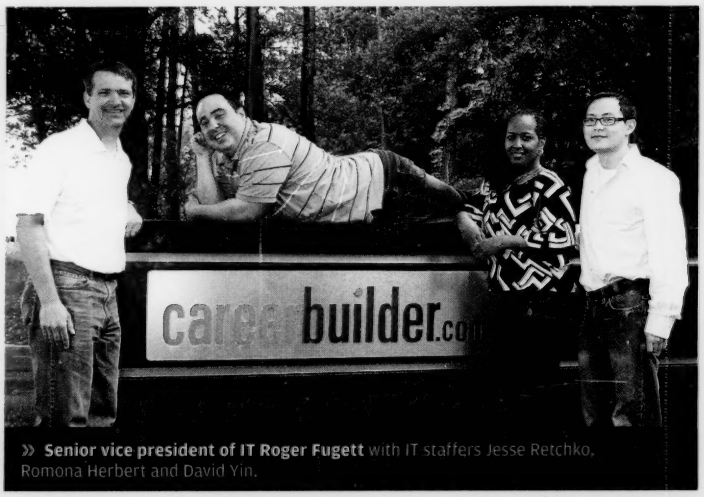
No. 4 for training

This telecommunications company in Basking Ridge, N.J., invests in its employees, offering them online training, instructor-led courses and $8,000 a year in tuition assistance. All of that training pays off with successful projects, such as last year's launch of a new sales portal that was capable of handling exponential increases in usage as Verizon introduced three Apple devices in one calendar year.

NO. 2

CareerBuilder LLC

Innovation is rewarded, and IT projects are put on the fast track. BY ROBERT L. MITCHELL



CAREERBUILDER LLC

» **Senior vice president of IT Roger Fugett** with IT staffers Jesse Retchko, Romona Herbert and David Yin.

How do you hold on to IT talent when you're in the business of helping people find better jobs? Chicago-based CareerBuilder could face that problem. But employees like Sabrina Pickeral, chief engineer for corporate applications, say there's no need to look elsewhere when you have a clear career path, opportunities to further your education and strong rewards for performance.

Pickeral is taking advantage of tuition reimbursements of up to $10,000 a year while she works on a bachelor's degree. And she recently won $10,000 in an employee innovation competition. In all, IT staffers can earn up to 20% of their salaries in bonuses.

The IT environment, while busy, is "relaxed and fun," Pickeral says. Projects move quickly, rolled out in stages every three or four weeks, adds Roger Fugett, senior vice president of IT. "There's nothing tech employees hate more than working on something and never seeing it in production," he says. "Here you see the impact on the company every day." ◆

7 Lehigh Valley Health Network

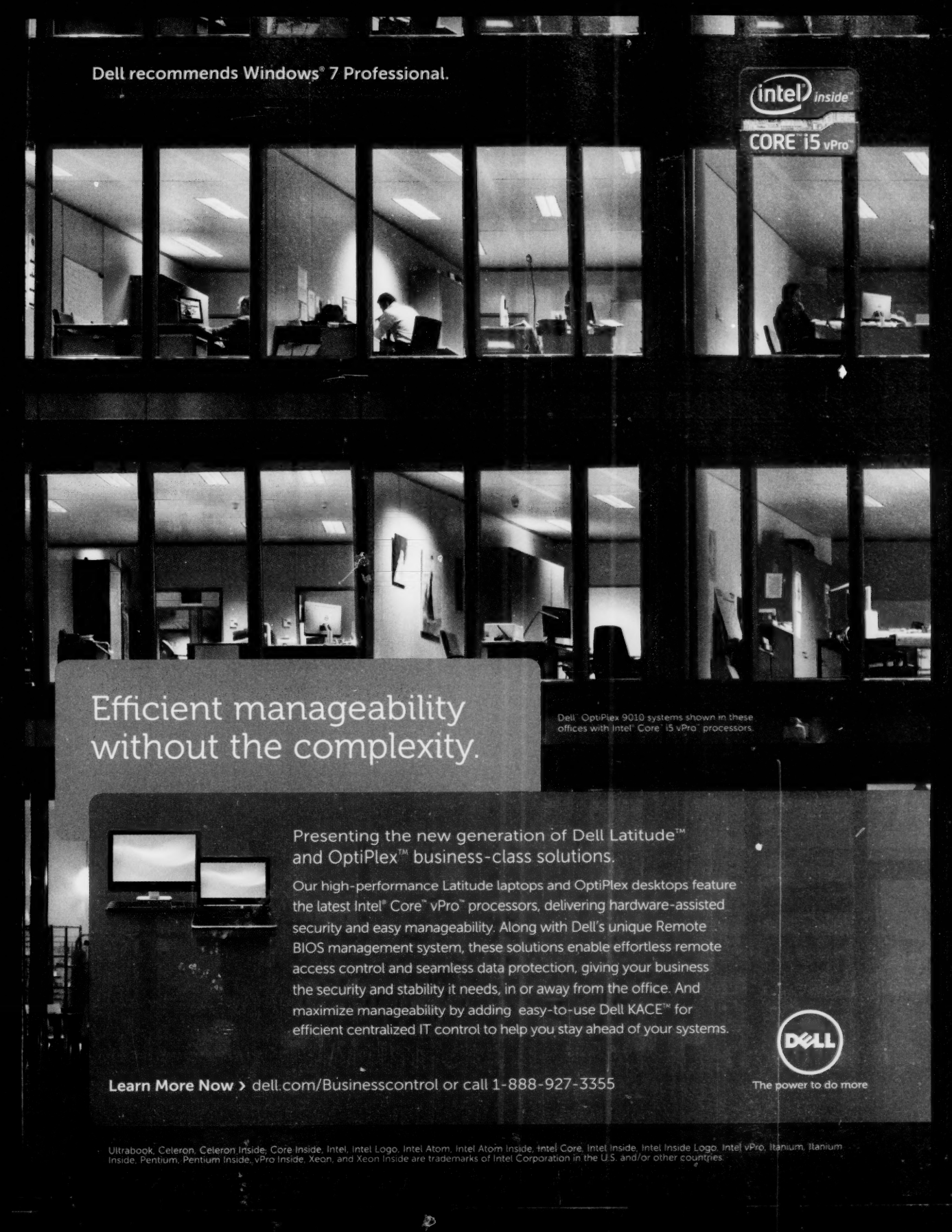
No. 10 for career development

Flexibility is the name of the game at this health services group in Allentown, Pa. IT workers are encouraged to develop expertise in particular technologies, but they also have the freedom to suggest and pursue new ideas, even ones involving technologies outside their areas of expertise. Employees work with their managers to carve out an opportune work schedule, and staffers can donate paid time off to co-workers who have used up their own.

8 Salesforce.com Inc.

No. 7 for training

Every employee has a voice at this San Francisco-based provider of hosted CRM applications. The IT department uses company products like Force.com to create custom apps for their teams' projects. And the company's internal social network, Chatter, allows people to share ideas, collaborate with colleagues, answer questions and discuss new technologies. The employees who are most active and engaged on Chatter are sometimes invited to sit in on executive meetings.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9 Chesapeake Energy Corp.

IT promotions: 12%

Challenges and rewards are high for workers at this oil and gas exploration and production company in Oklahoma City. A fast pace and a dynamic environment keep IT employees engaged. Favorite perks include a 72,000-square-foot fitness center for employees and their families, a recently opened child care center with 63,000 square feet of state-of-the-art play and learning space, a healthcare center that charges a $5 copay for medical and dental appointments, and a community garden.

10 Securian Financial Group

Women IT managers: 50%

A professional yet fun culture prevails at this financial services and insurance company in St. Paul, Minn., and that environment is often cited as the reason people choose to stay at Securian. The family-friendly work atmosphere is important to IT employees, many of whom are raising young children. On-site day care and private, comfortable lactation rooms help parents balance their family and professional responsibilities.

11 University of Pennsylvania

Women in IT: 38%

This Ivy League university in Philadelphia offers solid benefits, including a generous tuition reimbursement program, a 403(b) plan and a flexible work environment. But it's the hidden perks, such as discounts on everything from cars to computers and admission to cultural events, that make working at Penn unique. Innovation is encouraged: The ISC Exploration Days program lets employees devote a day to exploring new ideas, technologies and processes. One IT employee independently developed a system that improved wireless network connectivity across the campus.

12 Grant Thornton LLP

No. 5 for training

Employees at this Chicago-based accounting firm say they appreciate its culture of continuous improvement. Newly hired staffers begin their careers at Grant Thornton by taking part in a two-week onboarding program in which they gain the tools and information they need to succeed. Once on the job, IT employees are encouraged to continue honing their skills through at least 40 hours per year of fully funded training, which includes career development and business education classes.

NO.

14 SAS Institute Inc.

IT workers are encouraged to set their own hours and share their best ideas. BY MARY K. PRATT

SAS INSTITUTE INC.

» **SAS IT staffers** Rusti Ludwick, Tigran Mirzoev, Katie Boone, DeMarcus Hill and Bill Jones share ideas and a laugh at the company's Honoring Innovation Day.

IT manager Steven Toy says one of the biggest benefits at SAS — and one of the biggest incentives for him to stay — is the work/life balance he enjoys. "There's a culture from the top down that SAS wants you to have a life outside of work," says Toy, noting that IT has both formal and informal flexible scheduling arrangements to make that happen.

The work itself is also an attraction. "We're always touching the latest and greatest in technology," Toy says. "For a lot of people, that keeps them excited about coming to work."

The Cary, N.C.-based software company encourages IT staffers to bring their own ideas and solutions to the tasks before them, says Sara Betz, principal IT project manager. "I'm trusted to make the right decisions, and I'm empowered in how I do my job and get my job done." ◆

PRATT IS A *COMPUTERWORLD* CONTRIBUTING WRITER IN WALTHAM, MASS. YOU CAN CONTACT HER AT MARYKPRATT@VERIZON.NET.

13 Cedars-Sinai Health System

Minorities in IT: 62%

This Los Angeles-based nonprofit healthcare provider views the IT department as a strategic partner that plays a vital role in fulfilling the organization's goals. IT staffers learn about the latest medical technologies, such as electronic health records and nursing informatics, and work with clinical staffers on implementing systems that automate tasks and free up medical professionals to focus on what's important: caring for patients.

15 Prudential Financial Inc.

Women in IT: 34%

This Newark, N.J.-based life insurer is committed to providing a family-friendly workplace, offering a variety of on-site and in-home child and elder care options. Employees and their families also have access to free counseling services. Eight on-site health clinics, 10 fitness centers, and opportunities for telecommuting and working flexible schedules help staffers stay healthy and maintain work/life balance.

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16 Principal Financial Group Inc.

IT promotions: 11%

The spirit of collaboration can be felt throughout the IT department at this Des Moines-based financial services provider. IT professionals regularly work with colleagues in other departments on technology-driven business projects, and they carve out customized career paths with the help of their supervisors. Employees can take advantage of a variety of flexible working arrangements including flextime, telecommuting and job-sharing; they can even use personal devices to access corporate systems.

17 Qualcomm Inc.

Minorities in IT: 38%

IT employees at this San Diego-based vendor of wireless communications technologies are encouraged to move within the organization to improve their existing skills or learn new ones. In 2011, 14% of the IT staffers were promoted into roles with increased responsibilities. The company's Innovator of the Year Award is presented to an employee who has a history of taking an innovative approach to work and has made a significant business impact beyond his or her project team or department.

18 Kaiser Permanente

No. 2 for diversity

Employee health and wellness is a priority at this health maintenance organization in Oakland, Calif. In 2011, Kaiser expanded its award-winning Healthy Workforce program, launching the KP Walk campaign to encourage employees to walk for 30 minutes a day, five days a week, and providing maps and other tools to help them achieve their walking goals. IT employees walked a collective 27,000-plus miles in response to a challenge from the CIO.

NO.

22 Marriott International

Overseas gigs are appealing opportunities for IT staffers. BY STACY COLLETT

MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL

IT staffers Preston Joyce and Alyssa Lotuaco.

With nearly 45% of Marriott's development pipeline located outside of North America, global opportunities abound for IT employees. Alyssa Lotuaco, director of the enterprise project management office, recently traveled to China, India, Singapore, the United Arab Emirates, Germany and London to evaluate locations for the hotel giant's next global data center.

Stateside, senior systems consultant Preston Joyce is working virtually with colleagues in the U.K. to standardize their offices' labor management system. Staff diversity is key to such efforts, he says, because "we can leverage talent and expertise from a wide group of people."

Marriott offers more than 30,000 in-person and online training courses to help employees reach their career goals. Discounted hotel stays are a popular employee perk. ◆

COLLETT IS A *COMPUTERWORLD* CONTRIBUTING WRITER. YOU CAN CONTACT HER AT STCOLLETT@AOL.COM.

19 Palmetto Health

Women IT managers: 62%

IT workers at this not-for-profit healthcare system in Columbia, S.C., get a sense of satisfaction from the knowledge that they contribute directly to improving patient care. The IT department played a key role in last year's "One Palmetto" initiative to coordinate and standardize systems across multiple facilities and departments. IT staffers say supportive colleagues and a positive work environment help them meet such challenges head-on.

20 Booz Allen Hamilton

No. 3 for diversity, No. 6 for benefits

IT staffers at this global consulting firm based in McLean, Va., keep up with the latest technologies through in-person classes or distance learning, or by teaming up with the firm's client-facing IT consultants. Booz Allen supports IT employees who want to move between teams or transfer to the client-facing side of the business, helping them gain the experience they need to succeed.

21 Coca-Cola Enterprises Inc.

No. 10 for retention

At this Atlanta-based bottling company, employees of all levels interact with IT leaders daily in an easygoing environment with few hierarchical barriers. The custom-designed offices feature meeting rooms with cutting-edge collaboration tools, a brainstorming room with interactive whiteboards, and a Coca-Cola Freestyle fountain machine where employees can mix 127 different soda flavors.

TOP 10 RANKINGS

SOURCE: *COMPUTERWORLD*'S 2012 BEST PLACES TO WORK IN IT SURVEY

» BENEFITS

1 General Mills **2** University of Pennsylvania **3** Transocean **4** CA Technologies **5** Cancer Treatment Centers of America **6** Booz Allen Hamilton **7** Sacramento Municipal Utility District **8** Miami Children's Hospital **9** Intuit **10** H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center & Research Institute

» TRAINING

1 Cancer Treatment Centers of America **2** Commonwealth Financial Network **3** CareerBuilder **4** Verizon Wireless **5** Grant Thornton **6** General Mills **7** Salesforce.com **8** Manheim Digital **9** Fairfax County Public Schools **10** MetroStar Systems

» RETENTION

1 Commonwealth Financial Network **2** Cancer Treatment Centers of America **3** Manheim Digital **4** USAA **5** CareerBuilder **6** Quicken Loans **7** SAS Institute **8** MetroStar Systems **9** Jack Henry & Associates **10** Coca-Cola Enterprises

» DIVERSITY

1 WellPoint **2** Kaiser Permanente **3** Booz Allen Hamilton **4** AT&T Services **5** Miami Children's Hospital **6** Manheim Digital **7** University of Pennsylvania **8** Caesars Entertainment **9** University of Miami **10** Quicken Loans

» CAREER DEVELOPMENT

1 Corning **2** BNSF Railway **3** CME Group **4** Cancer Treatment Centers of America **5** Quicken Loans **6** Manheim Digital **7** MetroStar Systems **8** Commonwealth Financial Network **9** General Mills **10** Lehigh Valley Health Network

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NO. 1 Sacramento Municipal Utility District

IT pros work with state-of-the-art technologies and enjoy great benefits. BY ROBERT L. MITCHELL

IT staffers Carol Nye, Jaspal Singh, Alice Yam, Jeff Stiles and Joe Robles.

SACRAMENTO MUNICIPAL UTILITY DISTRICT

If working in IT for an electric utility doesn't sound exciting, you haven't been keeping up. "With everything that's going on with smart grid right now, for IT it's like being a kid in a candy store," says Carol Nye, business technology program manager at the Sacramento Municipal Utility District. "With all of the projects going on, we need more developers. We're hiring."

Lead storage administrator Jeff Stiles calls SMUD "a big little company." The utility has just 2,000 employees, but with $1.3 billion in revenue it can afford an enterprise-class IT operation. "Our solutions are full-scale, but we're small enough that I can touch everything," he says.

Employees have access to bike trails along the nearby American River, and they can take advantage of perks such as flexible scheduling options, on-site child care, transit subsidies and a private lakeside campground in the mountains.

"We have fantastic benefits, our pay is absolutely great for the Sacramento region, and we've got a great work/life balance," says Nye. "I can't imagine a better place to work." ◆

23 Caesars Entertainment Corp.

No. 8 for diversity

A "pay for results" philosophy reigns at the world's largest gaming company. Top performers are rewarded with merit increases, cash bonuses and credits that can be redeemed for merchandise. The Las Vegas-based company also recognizes top talent with formal rewards programs such as its quarterly Star Performer awards.

25 HCA Inc.

Women in IT: 39%

Training and development opportunities are available to IT employees at this Nashville-based for-profit hospital operator. IT leadership candidates receive mentoring and take on special technology projects, while an immersion program shows IT staffers the real-life impact of their work as they shadow physicians, nurses and technicians in the hospital environment.

26 Quintiles

IT promotions: 22%

Challenging assignments abound for IT pros at this biopharmaceutical services organization in Research Triangle Park, N.C., as do rewards such as cash bonuses. In 2011, IT employees were recognized for launching Infosario, a suite of services that was developed in-house and is now offered as a product to business customers.

27 American Fidelity Assurance Co.

Women in IT: 32%

A promote-from-within policy assures IT staffers at this Oklahoma City-based health and insurance company that they will be considered first for job openings and other advancement opportunities. Other pluses include flexible work schedules, an on-site fitness center, an award-winning wellness program and a range of community-oriented activities, such as food drives and blood drives.

28 Cummins Inc.

Minorities in IT: 40%

Employees at this global power company in Columbus, Ind., have numerous opportunities to grow, develop new skills and gain exposure to new disciplines. Career development options include Six Sigma training and the chance to work on cross-functional and cross-geographic teams. The company extends its benefits coverage to employees' domestic partners.

29 Monsanto Co.

Women IT managers: 37%

IT employees at this biotechnology giant in St. Louis have good visibility into how their efforts make a difference for the company, which shows its gratitude through an array of recognition programs. Monsanto offers a yearlong development program designed to help high-potential IT leaders enhance their leadership and interpersonal skills.

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NO. 33 The Vanguard Group Inc.

Training and skills development are backed by generous tuition assistance. BY STACY COLLETT

THE VANGUARD GROUP INC.

» **IT staffers** strike a pose at a winter-themed Fashionable Friday.

Vanguard strives to develop well-rounded IT staffers who have both technical and leadership skills. From the get-go, employees are offered technical and soft skills training, and they can take advantage of mentoring and job rotation programs. "There's a focus on communication," says Nathalie Sakimura, senior manager of the technology and investment platforms group. Effective communication with clients is key to realizing the full potential of technology, she adds.

Based in Valley Forge, Pa., the investment management firm handles big custom development projects for its retail and institutional clients in-house, enabling IT employees to work with leading-edge technologies. IT staffers can also volunteer to investigate new technologies as members of five-person research and innovation teams.

Benefits include an academic assistance program, through which employees can receive up to $9,000 annually toward graduate or undergraduate tuition. "It's one of the biggest perks for me," says Michael Lombardi, business systems analyst in systems integration. "Vanguard pushes their crew to expand their knowledge and grow as employees."

A quirky perk is Fashionable Fridays — an IT tradition of wearing themed outfits every Friday. IT offices in the U.S., Europe, Australia and Asia take turns picking the global fashion theme. ◆

30 CDW

IT promotions: 10%

An inclusive culture prevails at this technology services provider in Vernon Hills, Ill., where IT workers are encouraged to participate in strategic decision-making. A favorite perk for CDW employees and their immediate family members is the opportunity to purchase, at significantly discounted prices, any of the numerous tech products the company sells.

31 Scottrade Financial Services Inc.

IT training days: 10

Working at this St. Louis-based online brokerage gives IT staffers exposure to the latest technologies and fosters their career development. In the past year, IT launched a mobile trading app and integrated a third-party order-routing application. Close collaboration with business units means IT workers have the opportunity to develop and guide strategy in conjunction with each department.

32 WellPoint Inc.

Women in IT: 40%

The healthcare industry is changing rapidly, and IT staffers at this Indianapolis-based health benefits provider are rising to the challenge with advanced projects that include making IBM Watson technology available to healthcare providers. WellPoint offers an array of health and wellness benefits, including on-site fitness centers, wellness initiatives and healthy selections at on-site cafeterias.

34 DTE Energy Co.

Minorities in IT: 32%

IT leaders at this Detroit-based natural gas and electric utility have a variety of financial rewards to bestow on deserving staffers, including stock options, spot awards, and performance-based pay increases and bonuses. The company also has several employee recognition programs. Free parking in an enclosed area with climate-controlled walkways to the office complex is a welcome perk in chilly Detroit.

35 OhioHealth

Women IT managers: 36%

The IT department at this regional healthcare system in Columbus supports hospitals, ambulatory care sites, home care and physician practices, so staffers have the opportunity to develop expertise in a variety of healthcare technologies. Exceptional performance is recognized with formal awards, gift cards, handwritten thank-you notes, staff meeting announcements, spot bonuses and other prizes.

36 Raytheon Co.

IT promotions: 12%

Sharing knowledge is a core value at this Waltham, Mass.-based defense contractor. Staffers can communicate with one another on an internal IT social network, or they can turn to an informal network of the 100 "most connected" IT employees to work on business challenges, tap organizational thinking and expand skills by connecting with experts in particular technology or business areas.

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37 Rackspace US Inc.

IT promotions: 21%

This San Antonio-based managed hosting services company looks for tech staffers who can deliver exceptional customer service, often hiring people for their attitude and aptitude, and then training them to develop technical expertise. Every manager has a "fun budget" that can be tapped to celebrate team and individual successes. After seven years of service, employees are eligible for one-month paid sabbaticals.

38 Applied Materials

Minority IT managers: 49%

A flexible career path is a big draw for IT professionals who work at this maker of semiconductor production equipment in Santa Clara, Calif. Staffers are encouraged to pursue new assignments and new roles – and even move to offices in different locations – to take advantage of career opportunities. Applied Materials has a "work from anywhere" policy that fosters telecommuting. Company-sponsored community service initiatives, including park clean-ups and repair projects at crisis shelters, help those in need and build team spirit.

40 Intuit Inc.

No. 9 for benefits

Business and technology are fully aligned at this Mountain View, Calif.-based maker of TurboTax and other financial software products. IT employees are "embedded" within business units and have dual reporting relationships with the CIO and business managers. The company recognizes talented, innovative workers with gift cards, coveted spots on the Innovation Wall of Fame, dinner with the executive team, all-expenses-paid trips and more.

41 CME Group

No. 3 for career development

Working in IT for this Chicago-based financial services firm, which owns the Chicago Mercantile Exchange and the Chicago Board of Trade, means constantly improving systems to be faster, more reliable and more scalable in order to support growth and globalization. In 2011, the exchange experienced its highest volume ever, with nearly 3.4 billion contracts traded and an average daily volume of 13.4 million contracts. CME maintains a "one IT" philosophy, and the department hosts events like table tennis tournaments to encourage tech workers to build relationships with one another.

NO.

39 Campbell Soup Co.

Global operations help IT staffers learn best practices from around the world. BY MARY K. PRATT

CAMPBELL SOUP CO.

» **IT employees** Josh Mann, Kevin Rice, Chad Butler, Donna Braunschweig, Stan Pingelski and Elaine Moore-Wright.

Josh Mann was looking for an employer that would support his professional growth and give him opportunities to work with other business groups. He found what he wanted when he joined Campbell Soup in February 2011, he says.

The Camden, N.J., maker of soups and other food products supports Mann's involvement in professional organizations as well as his work toward an MBA – the company even reimburses his tuition expenses. A manager of enterprise projects, Mann says his job also offers challenging work and "the opportunity to be part of something innovative."

Donna Braunschweig, a director of enterprise portfolio and strategy, says she values the company's global reach, which gives staffers a chance to see best practices and review the latest technologies from around the world. She also appreciates the fact that she has the freedom to determine how best to do her job. "Managers and peers trust you and inspire trust," she says. "We encourage people to have their own ideas. It allows for creativity and innovation." ◆

42 Corning Inc.

No. 1 for career development

A diverse workforce creates a competitive advantage that drives innovation, says this Corning, N.Y.-based maker of specialty glass and ceramics. To ensure that all employees thrive, the company offers dynamic career assessment and planning tools through its online professional development system. IT workers use the system to explore opportunities in technical, project or management paths within IT or throughout the company.

43 SAP America Inc.

Training days for IT: 8

Over the past two years, IT workers at the Newtown Square, Pa.-based U.S. division of SAP AG have adopted an "SAP Runs SAP" approach. The U.S. IT department serves as the first alpha user of key SAP products and takes part in innovative projects, giving IT staffers a chance to get their hands on cutting-edge technologies and influence product strategies and future SAP sales. IT workers are also encouraged to participate in customer-facing roles.

RANKINGS BY ORGANIZATION SIZE

SOURCE: *COMPUTERWORLD*'S 2012 BEST PLACES TO WORK IN IT SURVEY

Based on the total number of U.S. employees:

LARGE 10,000 or more employees
MIDSIZE 2,500 to 9,999 employees
SMALL Fewer than 2,500 employees

LARGE

1. **USAA** (Overall rank: 1)
2. General Mills (4)
3. Verizon Wireless (6)
4. Lehigh Valley Health Network (7)
5. Chesapeake Energy (9)
6. University of Pennsylvania (11)
7. Cedars-Sinai Health System (13)
8. Prudential Financial (15)
9. Principal Financial Group (16)
10. Qualcomm (17)

MIDSIZE

1. **Quicken Loans** (Overall rank: 5)
2. Salesforce.com (8)
3. Grant Thornton (12)
4. SAS Institute (14)
5. Quintiles (26)
6. CDW (30)
7. Scottrade Financial Services (31)
8. DTE Energy (34)
9. Rackspace US (37)
10. Applied Materials (38)

SMALL

1. **CareerBuilder** (Overall rank: 2)
2. Commonwealth Financial Network (3)
3. Securian Financial Group (10)
4. Coca-Cola Enterprises (21)
5. Sacramento Municipal Utility District (24)
6. American Fidelity Assurance (27)
7. National Information Solutions Cooperative (NISC) (54)
8. Reed Technology & Information Services (66)
9. Manheim Digital (71)
10. OCLC Online Computer Library Center (74)

COMPUTERWORLD 100 BEST PLACES TO WORK IN IT 2012

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* "100 Best Places to Work in IT," *Computerworld* magazine, June 2012.

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44 The Sherwin-Williams Co.

IT promotions: 16%

As this Cleveland-based paint manufacturer continues to expand internationally, with locations in 111 countries on six continents, IT employees advance their skills and work with the newest technologies in an environment focused on career growth and innovation. An engagement specialist is available to guide staffers through career challenges and help them with advancement opportunities. The company strives to nurture the next generation of IT professionals by offering an extensive student work co-op program.

45 International Paper

Women in IT: 35%

Staffers at this Memphis-based paper manufacturer are quick to lend a hand when their peers need assistance, on the job or off. Employees regularly donate to the company's employee relief fund, which helps co-workers rebuild their lives in the wake of natural disasters such as the tornadoes that tore through Alabama in 2011. The company and its employees have also raised millions of dollars to support numerous charitable organizations, from Habitat for Humanity to the United Nations World Food Programme.

47 Automatic Data Processing Inc.

IT turnover: 2%

IT staffers at this payroll and tax-filing processing service in Roseland, N.J., don't have to wonder how their jobs tie into achieving the company's strategic objectives. Their work in developing ADP Mobile, a new mobile platform and delivery channel launched last year, was a clear case of technology innovation driving business opportunity and helping the company keep pace with a rapidly changing consumer-driven market.

48 FedEx Corp.

Women in IT: 33%

Supporting four major operating units and operations worldwide, FedEx IT teams maintain, design and re-envision systems critical to the Memphis-based package-delivery company's core functionality and long-term growth. Because of that far-reaching scope, IT staffers take on responsibility for and grow from a wide range of initiatives. Outstanding performance and extra efforts are rewarded with the Purple Promise, Bravo Zulu and IT Hall of Fame awards.

49 Discover Financial Services

IT promotions: 13%

Helping employees achieve a healthy work/life balance is a priority for this Riverwoods, Ill.-based financial services firm. Its 80-acre campus boasts a running trail, outdoor basketball and volleyball courts, a cafeteria and a 19,000-square-foot fitness center. Other perks include free wellness screenings, dry-cleaning, a package mailing service, classified ads on the company intranet and chair massages.

50 Financial Industry Regulatory Authority

Minority IT managers: 83%

As the enforcement arm of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, Rockville, Md.-based FINRA protects investors and ensures the integrity of U.S. financial markets. The regulatory agency recognizes employees who are dedicated to the fulfillment of that mission with rewards, including the Bright Idea Award for ideas that result in performance improvements.

NO.

46 Aflac Inc.

IT staffers feel a connection to the insurer's corporate mission. BY STACY COLLETT

AFLAC INC.

IT staffers Ekanath Parab and Liya Lu.

Aflac IT employees are involved in many aspects of the insurance business, which makes them feel connected to the corporate mission of providing supplemental coverage. "There's a sense that we are a part of delivering the promise to policy holders" to help them during bad times, says Tashia Brandenburg, senior manager of IT operations for claims and call center.

To foster employee collaboration, the Columbus, Ga.-based company set up an area called "Duck Works" – a cluster of workspaces equipped with computers, phones, projectors and TV screens, where members of business and development teams can gather to work on projects.

"Leadership at every level has employees' best interests in mind," says Joy Ingram, an operations analyst in product development and strategy. New employees participate in a formal 90-day onboarding program during which they are paired with mentors.

Perks include on-site child care, summer camps for school-age kids, an on-site gym and paid time off for volunteer work. Nurse practitioners are available on campus for checkups. ◆

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NO. 54 National Information Solutions Cooperative

IT pros are attracted to the supportive environment and shared values. BY MARY K. PRATT

IT staffers like John Ferlisi, Patrick O'Brien and Paul Blessing are encouraged to bring new technologies to the office.

NATIONAL INFORMATION SOLUTIONS COOPERATIVE

Employees at the National Information Solutions Cooperative know exactly what kind of values they're expected to have. The data processing and billing co-op in Lake Saint Louis, Mo., lists them in the lobby: integrity, relationships, innovation, teamwork, empowerment and personal development.

Those values are evident every day, and they help create a great work environment, says Doug Remboldt, NISC's vice president of utility solutions and technical services. "A part of our annual review is based on our relationships and how we help each other. It's part of our culture," he says.

Doug Belew, team leader in the internal technical services department, says the combination of a supportive work environment and supportive team members, along with challenging work, keep him and his peers engaged.

Another important part of NISC's culture, says Remboldt, is that tech workers have the freedom to experiment. "Employees are encouraged to bring in new technologies," he says. "We try to be a company that lets people play." ◆

51 Heartland Payment Systems

Women IT managers: 26%

Innovation is what makes IT professionals thrive – and at this Princeton, N.J.-based payments processor, they get plenty of it. Recent examples of IT innovations include moving the company's core payment processing platforms to a cloud model and implementing an iPad-enabled CRM tool.

52 Bank of America Corp.

Minorities in IT: 42%

IT employees don't toil in the shadows at this banking giant based in Charlotte, N.C. Two programs recognize employees who make outstanding contributions in innovation, patents and technology development. The bank's affinity group for female employees, Women in Technology, has 13 chapters in the United States that offer development, outreach and networking opportunities to members.

53 Southern Co.

IT turnover: 3%

This Atlanta-based energy firm has a tradition of offering comprehensive training to its IT employees. The company website provides access to online and in-person courses, and it helps workers identify strengths and gaps and explore paths to leadership. Employees can also receive tuition reimbursement of up to $5,000 per year.

55 Ascension Health

Women in IT: 41%

IT employees at this nonprofit health system in St. Louis have the satisfaction of knowing that the work they do supports patient care. The IT team implements cutting-edge technologies, including clinical systems, electronic medical records, mobile apps and telehealth services. Each IT employee has a customized learning plan that is created, measured and tracked annually online as part of the performance review cycle.

56 Norton Healthcare

Women IT managers: 61%

The IT department at this hospital and healthcare facilities operator in Louisville, Ky., promotes a culture in which staffers are rewarded for their hard work. At a special recognition center, staffers can honor their peers for going above and beyond, welcome new employees, and celebrate birthdays, certifications earned, career milestones and more.

57 Johns Hopkins Medicine

Minorities in IT: 31%

IT workers at this Baltimore-based healthcare system and school of medicine get a sizable education perk. The dependent children of faculty members, staffers and retirees are eligible to receive 50% off full-time, undergraduate tuition as long as the employees have completed a minimum of two consecutive years of full-time employment at Johns Hopkins.

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NO. 63 Miami Children's Hospital

Tech workers appreciate the opportunities to grow into new roles. BY KEN GAGNÉ

MIAMI CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

» **IT executives** David Bratt, Cathy Benway, CIO Ed Martinez and Pascale Prepetit.

The IT staff at Miami Children's Hospital plays a vital role in ensuring that the Florida subspecialty hospital is equipped to do its important work. Tech employees tackle key projects, such as moving the hospital from paper to electronic health records and implementing a clinical genomic demographic and operational database for personalized medicine.

Miami Children's offers solid benefits that include up to $4,000 in tuition reimbursement per year — a perk that Pascale Prepetit, director of finance and business systems, used to obtain a master's degree in health administration.

Prepetit says she appreciates the career development opportunities the hospital affords its staff. In fact, one-third of the IT department at MCH has been promoted during the past three years. "They assess your strengths and place you into an area where you can grow," she says.

Whatever their challenges, the IT staffers never lose sight of their true goal. Says CIO Ed Martinez, "We're here to help the kids." ◆

58 NextEra Energy Inc.

Minority IT managers: 37%

IT workers at this energy producer and distributor in Juno Beach, Fla., get their hands on the latest technologies. The team is creating applications that use mobile device cameras, Wi-Fi and vibration detection to monitor more than 9,000 wind turbines. IT staffers have also built performance and diagnostic dashboards to monitor temperature, wind speed, wind direction and blade pitch for all turbines.

59 Cerner Corp.

IT promotions: 24%

This Kansas City, Mo.-based provider of clinical and administrative IT systems to the healthcare industry strives to promote a healthy work/life balance. The company fitness facility is free to all employees and offers a gymnasium, an indoor pool, a cardio room, personal trainers, exercise classes and more. The campus also includes a primary care clinic.

60 Jack Henry & Associates Inc.

No. 9 for retention

Flexible work arrangements at this Monett, Mo.-based provider of computer systems to banks and credit unions include telecommuting, flexible hours and more. Jeans and T-shirts are the standard office attire. The company encourages community service and recently donated $81,000 and many hours of labor to the Joplin, Mo., tornado relief efforts.

61 W.W. Grainger Inc.

IT turnover: 2%

There's a bounty of benefits at this Lake Forest, Ill.-based company, which distributes maintenance, repair and service equipment. The hallmark of Grainger's benefits package is its profit-sharing trust, a retirement savings plan driven by company profitability. In 2011, the award represented more than 18% of pay for employees with five or more years of service.

62 AT&T Services Inc.

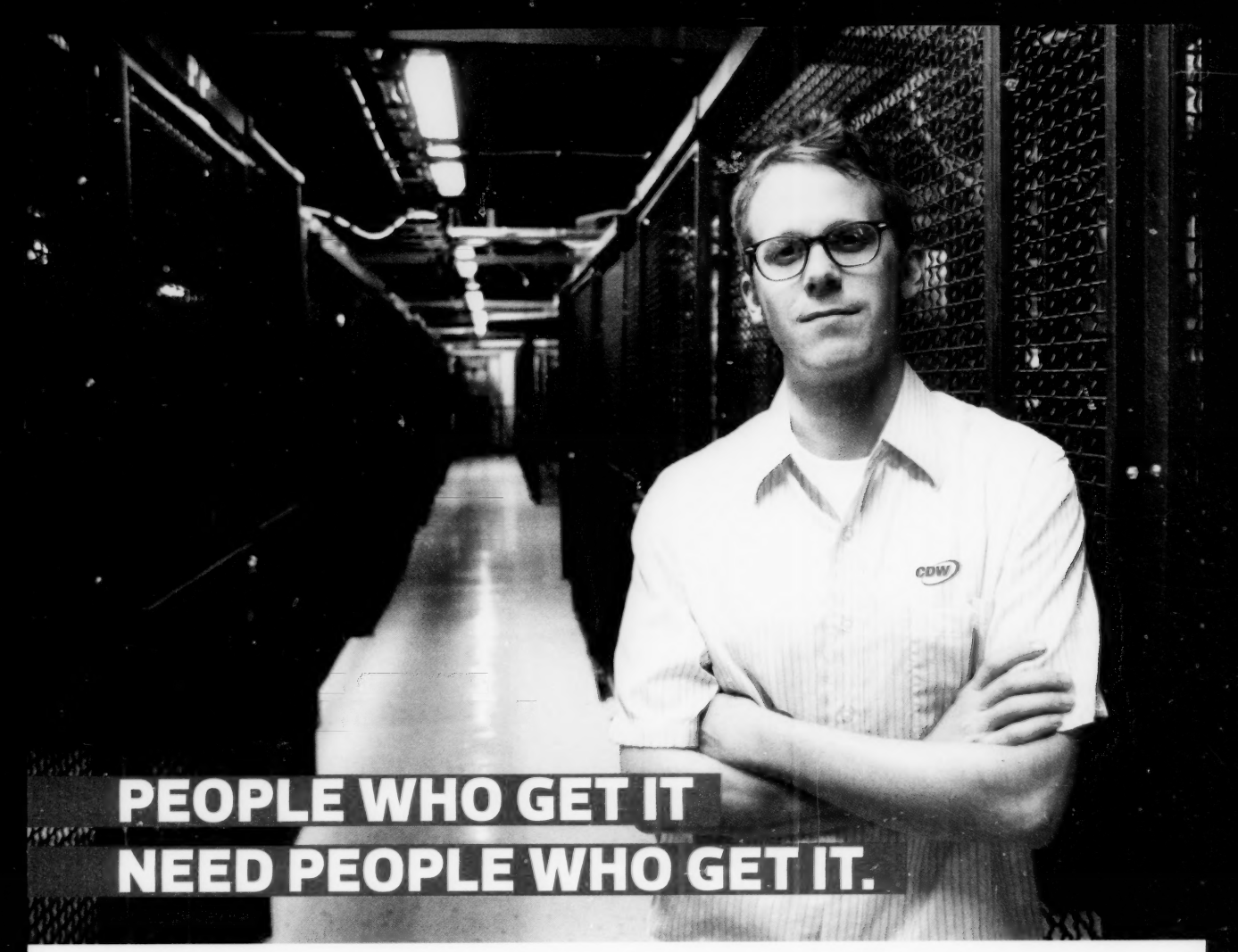
No. 4 for diversity

At this Dallas-based telecommunications provider, IT employees' voices are heard. The company conducts an employee survey every 12 to 18 months, turns employees' top priorities into action plans and measures the outcomes. An "innovation pipeline" lets employees share their ideas. Last year, 143 patents were issued to 251 AT&T IT employees.

64 Cancer Treatment Centers of America Inc.

No. 1 for training, No. 2 for retention

IT and innovation go hand in hand at this Schaumburg, Ill.-based network of hospitals for advanced cancer care. IT workers get their hands on technologies such as virtualization, private clouds, telemedicine, electronic health records and mobility software designed to improve patient care and safety.



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EMPLOYERS BY THE NUMBERS

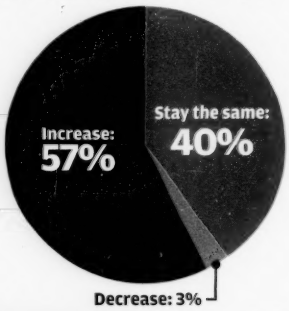
SOURCE: SURVEYS OF THE 100 BEST PLACES TO WORK IN IT 2012

» THE TYPICAL BEST PLACE

Revenue	$14.4B
IT budget	$250.7M
Total number of U.S. employees	29,662
Total number of U.S. IT employees	1,212
Average IT workweek	42 hours

» HIRING FORECAST

Percentages of organizations that expect the size of their U.S.-based IT staffs to do the following in 2012:



Average expected increase: 8.1%

Average expected decrease: 1.7%

» STAFFING

Average IT staff turnover rate, latest fiscal year	7.5%
Average percentage of IT staff promoted, latest fiscal year	10.8%

» COMMUNICATION

Percentage of organizations that do the following:

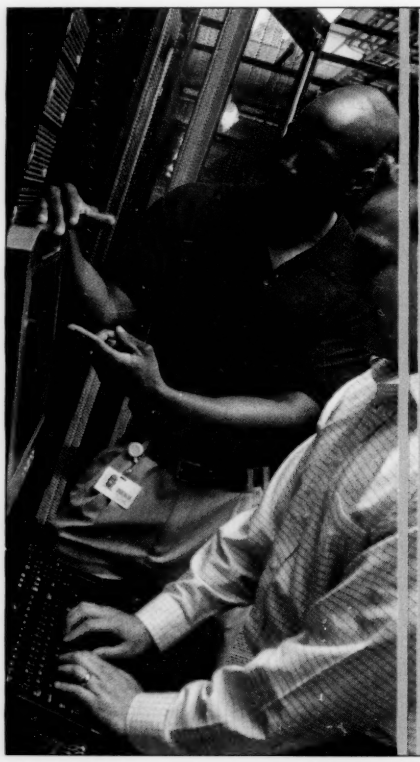
Offer IT staffers formal mentoring programs	60%
Survey IT staffers about job satisfaction once a year	60%
Survey IT staffers about job satisfaction more than once a year	18%

» TRAINING

Average number of training days for each IT employee in latest fiscal year	6
Average cost per IT employee for all training in latest fiscal year	$1,765
Percentage of organizations that said their training budgets per IT employee will increase in 2012	63%

» M&A ACTIVITY

Percentage of Best Places that have merged with or acquired organizations, or have divested business units, since Jan. 1, 2011	45%
Percentage of IT employees at all organizations affected by such activity (laid off, transferred, etc.)	2%



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YOUTUBE.COM/CHESAPEAKE

» TOP 5 OVERALL BENEFITS

Percentage of organizations that offer the following:

100%	Paid vacation
100%	Health insurance
100%	Flexible hours
99%	Corporate/employee wellness program
99%	Employee assistance program

» WOMEN IN IT*

32% of IT staffers (nonmanagers) are women.

31% of IT managers are women.

» MINORITIES IN IT*

30% of IT staffers (nonmanagers) are minorities.

20% of IT managers are minorities.

**Averages of responses of all organizations.*

» COMPENSATION

88% of organizations have budgeted for salary increases for IT employees in 2012.

84% have budgeted for bonuses for IT employees in 2012.

94% contribute to employees' 401(k) or 403(b) plans.

» TOP 5 COMPENSATION BENEFITS

Percentage of organizations that offer the following:

401(k)/403(b) plan	99%
Overtime pay	94%
Individual employee performance bonuses	91%
Employee referral bonus program	81%
Profit-sharing or employee stock ownership program	49%

» VACATION

16 days of paid vacation are provided after one year of service, on average.

23 days of paid vacation are provided after 10 years of service, on average.

» WHAT THEY DO

Percentage of organizations in the following industries:

Health/medical services	16%	Manufacturing	7%
Finance	12%	Education	4%
IT consulting	12%	Telecommunications	4%
Energy/utilities	9%	Food industry	3%
Insurance	7%	*All other industries:*	26%

» WHERE THEY ARE

Percentage of organizations in the following regions:

North Central	30%	Pacific	8%
South Atlantic	29%	Mountain	3%
Mid-Atlantic	16%	New England	3%
South Central	11%		

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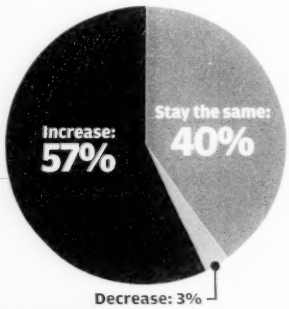

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NO. 66 Reed Technology & Information Services Inc.

Rewards and recognition programs make IT staffers feel appreciated. BY STACY COLLETT

Reed Technology is the sole provider of data capture services to the U.S. Patent & Trademark Office, so IT work at the Horsham, Pa.-based content management vendor impacts the entire U.S. patent system. "That has a tremendous effect on the worldwide intellectual property community, and ultimately jobs and the economy," says CIO Dave Ballai.

Cutting-edge systems and tools are required to make complex patent and trademark information readily available and easy to work with. But employee access to leading technologies doesn't stop there. "We've also built a very elaborate life sciences business in the U.S. and are doing some really neat things now working with clients filing with the European equivalent of the FDA to build publishing capabilities for drug and information labeling content in that area of the world," says Greg Martin, director of network systems. "We've also launched a Web archiving business."

Located 30 miles north of Philadelphia, Reed is proud of its package of perks and benefits. The company pays a competitive bonus to every IT employee who achieves objectives set at the beginning of each fiscal period. It also hosts a range of events, including gatherings in luxury boxes at sporting events, off-site dinners and an annual employee spirit week celebration.

"This company has more ways than I can mention for recognizing me," says David Dean, a senior architect. "They come to me personally, they send me awards … they recognize my group and the whole company. All those things make you feel good about working here." ◆

REED TECHNOLOGY & INFORMATION SERVICES INC.

» **IT supervisors** Jim Tannenbaum and Anne Marie Kaplan.

65 The Mitre Corp.

Women in IT: 32%

IT workers at this not-for-profit science and engineering organization in Bedford, Mass., have trouble picking their favorite perk. Both the work/life balance program and the retirement plan get high marks. The flexible work program offers eight options, including flextime, telecommuting, part-time employment and job-sharing. The retirement program has a 99% employee participation rate and provides more than 100 investment options.

67 Northwestern Mutual

Women IT managers: 39%

This Milwaukee-based life insurance company has an eye on its workers' futures. The company offers employees a fully-funded defined benefit pension plan, as well as a 401(k) plan with a 50% match on the first 6% that an employee contributes. A fully staffed health clinic is available on-site to treat basic and urgent care conditions, with a strong focus on healthy lifestyles and the well-being of employees. There are more than 25 employee clubs that offer company-subsidized activities.

68 H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center & Research Institute Inc.

No. 10 for benefits

The benefits package at Moffitt, one of the National Cancer Institute's elite Comprehensive Cancer Centers, is exhaustive. It includes childcare and medical benefits, dental and life insurance, long-term disability insurance, prepaid tuition assistance and a pension plan. The Tampa, Fla.-based healthcare provider also offers flexible work hours, a 403(b) plan, a parental leave benefit and a new on-site healthcare service that's free for employees.

69 CA Technologies

No. 4 for benefits

IT employees at this Islandia, N.Y.-based software vendor get to work with the company's own technologies before they're made available commercially. IT workers test alpha, beta and production code and provide recommendations for improving the quality, usability and delivery of technologies. The feedback loop goes both ways, with IT employees interacting with colleagues in other areas of the organization to actively solicit feedback for IT service improvements.

70 BNSF Railway

No. 2 for career development

At this Fort Worth, Texas-based freight transportation company, IT employees have opportunities to broaden and deepen their skills through challenging assignments, training, tuition reimbursement and mentoring programs. BNSF also dishes out an annual bonus based on company and individual performance. Its corporate headquarters facility, which features an award-winning architectural design, includes an employee cafeteria, a fitness center and a two-mile walking path; it's also home to a large art collection.

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71 Manheim Digital

No. 3 for retention

This Atlanta-based wholesale vehicle auction company invests in its people, providing them with professional development opportunities. The IT department uses the agile software development methodology, which emphasizes people over processes. For two days each month, the IT organization stops working on day-to-day tasks so employees can innovate and test new ideas.

73 Partners HealthCare System Inc.

Women IT managers: 45%

The Connected Work program at this Boston-based healthcare company allows IT employees to telecommute from remote work suites one to five days a week. Most staffers participate, using company-provided equipment and scheduling software to book suite space.

74 OCLC Online Computer Library Center

Women in IT: 27%

Options for alternative work arrangements at this Dublin, Ohio-based nonprofit computer library service and research organization include flexible hours, compressed workweeks, job-sharing and telecommuting. The company also provides amenities such as dry-cleaning and package-shipping services, cash machines and discounts at local businesses.

75 The George Washington University

Minorities in IT: 44%

The IT division at this university in the District of Columbia regularly recognizes employees who earn certifications, complete degrees or reach other career milestones. Tech staffers can also nominate their peers for several awards. Employee benefits include 96% coverage of tuition and expenses for undergraduate, graduate, doctoral and nondegree programs.

76 Fairfax County Public Schools

No. 9 for training

Training takes center stage at this school system — the nation's 12th largest — based in Falls Church, Va. In addition to face-to-face training and online courses, employees are offered the Leadership Development Cohort, a district-wide program that ties the instructional and IT worlds together. The one-year program requires two days of classes per month as well as outside activities and projects.

77 Eastman Chemical Co.

IT promotions: 12%

Women who work in IT at Eastman recently teamed up with Microsoft to host "DigiGirlz Day" in Kingsport, Tenn., where the chemical maker is based. Microsoft and Eastman employees met with female high-school students to raise awareness about IT careers and to stress the importance of math and science education in advancing technology skills.

78 Penn National Insurance

Women IT managers: 50%

IT employees are recognized in public forums for their accomplishments at this Harrisburg, Pa.-based insurance company. Deserving IT staffers might get a shoutout in the company's annual report or through congratulatory messages from the board of directors. IT workers can take advantage of various flexible working arrangements, including compressed workweek options, the ability to work from home one to two days per week, and flexible starting times.

NO.

72 Sprint Nextel Corp.

On-the-job challenges and new learning opportunities keep IT employees engaged. BY MARY K. PRATT

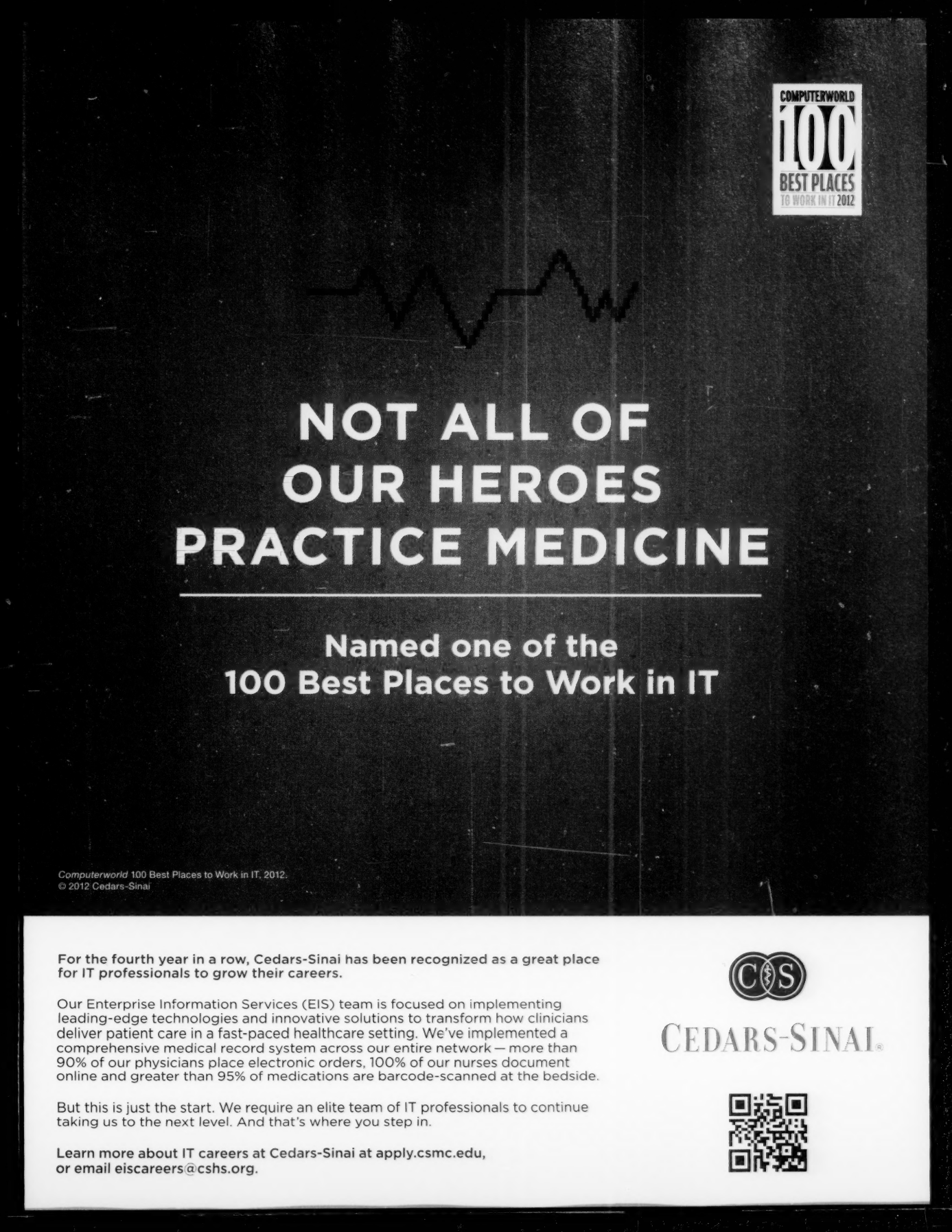
SPRINT NEXTEL CORP.

Sprint's corporate campus features trees, fountains and plenty of outdoor seating.

The voluntary turnover rate for IT workers at Sprint Nextel is just 1.9%, and that speaks volumes about employees' desire to stay at the company. Benefits such as health insurance, a 401(k) plan with a company contribution, flexible schedules and a "work anywhere" telecommuting policy help keep people on board at the telecommunications giant.

But Overland Park, Kan.-based Sprint says employees also stay because of its culture, which emphasizes respect, communication and challenging work. IT operations manager Renae Jernigan says she appreciates the opportunities to learn through both formal training programs and on-the-job challenges. "[Sprint] has given me the chance to work in different areas," she says. "That's what has been of interest to me — the opportunity to gain additional experience."

Senior vice president of IT Peter Campbell says the company focuses on pulling together and bringing about success. "We've been a place of significant change over time," he says, "and IT has made significant contributions to the turnaround of the company." ◆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79 Humana Inc.

IT promotions: 18%

IT employees get a stack of perks at this health insurance provider in Louisville, Ky., including lifestyle-assistance services and recognition and awards programs. A free, rewards-based wellness program inspires IT staffers to pursue healthy lifestyles, helping them to manage weight loss, stress and cholesterol. The company also offers on-site fitness centers, sports leagues and other health-related perks, including free flu shots, weight loss and tobacco cessation programs, and free biometric screenings.

80 Healthcare Service Corp.

Minorities in IT: 41%

High-performing IT employees at this Chicago-based health insurer earned more than $700,000 in 2011 through the STARS awards program, which honors individuals, teams and managers who go above and beyond their job duties to ensure the company's success. Plus, on-site state-of-the-art fitness centers give employees a convenient way to de-stress and exercise. These centers are discounted for employees, and offer free classes such as Zumba and yoga.

81 Paychex Inc.

Training days for IT: 17

Benefits are best described as robust at this payroll accounting firm in Rochester, N.Y. IT employees receive training to stay abreast of new technologies, get tuition reimbursement to continue their educations, and are encouraged to pursue professional development by attending conferences and joining professional organizations. They're also engaged in the company's Active Health wellness program, in which they participate in walk/run events and the company's annual eight-week "Eat Well, Live Well" challenge.

82 Baker Hughes Inc.

Minority IT managers: 27%

IT employees at this oil field services company in Houston are offered several ways to develop their careers. Choices include a competitive, projects-based talent program; a skills-building program that measures and recognizes progress and growth; and a planning program to help employees assess their skills and plot their career aspirations. The company earmarks 15% of its budget to put toward strategy and training programs.

NO. 84

The Boeing Co.

A job rotation program allows tech staffers to explore multiple IT roles. BY STACY COLLETT

MARIAN LOCKHART / BOEING

IT staffers David Kinney, Anthony Gregory, Sudha Sama and Gene Owen.

Opportunities abound at Boeing, where IT employees get to test the water in many different technology areas before choosing a specialty. The Chicago-based aeronautics company's IT job rotation program gives new employees a chance to learn about various technology specialties during six-month stints in different units. At the end of the third rotation, employees can choose an area of the business where they want to focus.

IT staffers can also "spend a day in the life" of business partners within Boeing. "We get to understand their daily concerns and the issues they might be having, and we look to improve those processes with IT solutions," says J.T. Scott, a manager in enterprise work authorization systems.

Employees also use their IT skills for charitable endeavors. Emily Roberts, an executive computing specialist, recently worked with other Boeing IT pros to develop a Web-based transportation scheduling program for American Cancer Society patients. "I got great exposure," says Roberts, "and I really got to see what kind of great intellectual capital Boeing has within IT." ◆

83 Edward Jones

Women IT managers: 41%

This St. Louis-based financial services firm, one of the largest operating partnerships in America, weathered the recent economic downturn without a single layoff. Possibly the sweetest reward at Edward Jones is its limited partnership opportunity. Nearly 5,000 employees became partners in 2011, and about 15,000 limited partners and 350 general partners now hold ownership shares in the company. Any employee with at least three years' tenure can earn a piece of the partnership pie.

85 Hess Corp.

Minorities in IT: 35%

More than 20% of the IT staff at this New York-based oil and gas company recently attended an IT leadership conference in Seattle. Employees participated in strategic planning, toured Microsoft headquarters and volunteered at the Ryther Child Center, which offers behavioral health services for children and their families. When parts of North Dakota were devastated by record flooding last summer, Hess was part of the recovery, donating $1 million for relief and rebuilding efforts.

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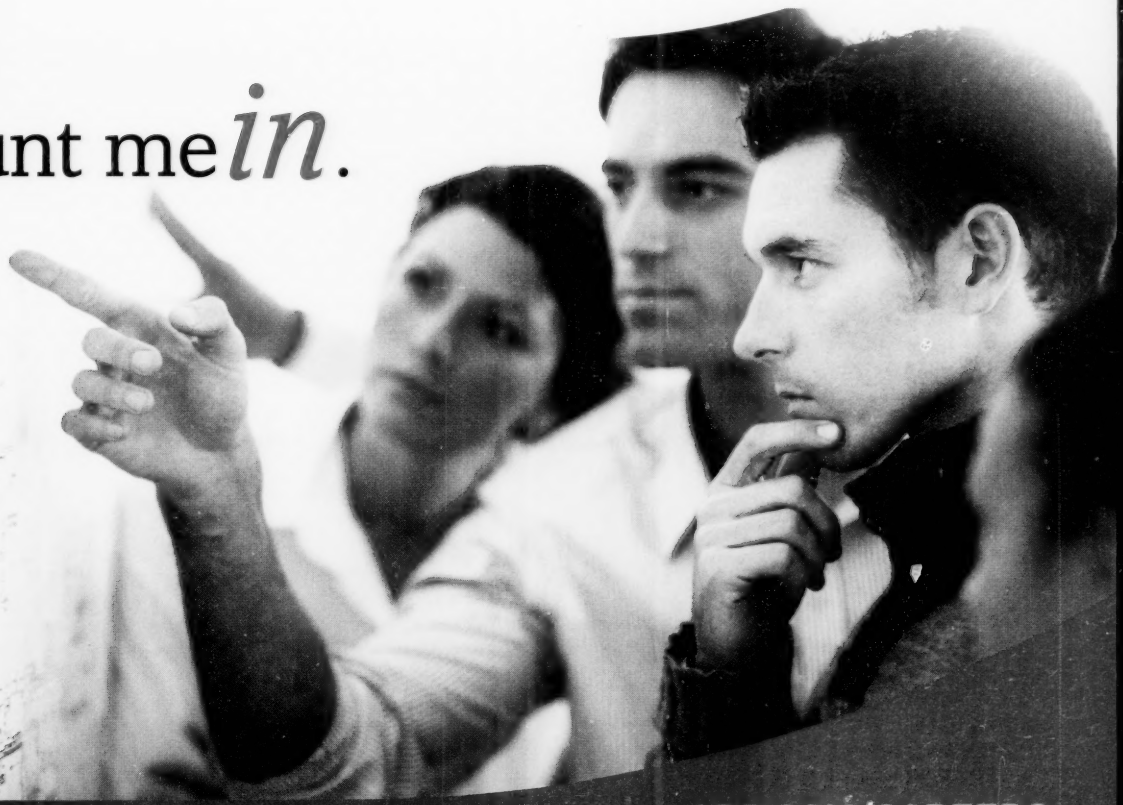

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86 Raymond James Financial

Women in IT: 36%

The perks at this financial services firm in St. Petersburg, Fla., include an on-site health center that charges reduced rates for employees enrolled in the company's medical plan. Retirement benefits include profit-sharing, employee stock ownership, and employee stock purchase plans.

87 Altria Client Services Inc.

IT promotions: 13%

IT staffers are kept busy and challenged at this Richmond, Va.-based tobacco company. Recent IT initiatives include relocating a data center to a state-of-the-art green facility and delivering new Web-based systems to support the field salesforce. The company's "IT University" offers employees a host of technology and business courses.

88 Publix Super Markets Inc.

Women IT managers: 33%

The list of IT accomplishments at this supermarket operator in Lakeland, Fla., is long. In 2011 alone, IT employees delivered new Web and mobile applications, a suite of HR self-service tools, a new scheduling and attendance system, and demographic-based product optimization tools. Each year, the company issues shares of its stock to eligible employees.

89 Carolinas HealthCare System

Women in IT: 47%

The employee wellness program at this Charlotte, N.C.-based healthcare provider has earned accolades throughout the industry. IT pros who have improved their health act as motivators for all the IT teams. By participating in wellness programs, 77% of IT employees received financial awards of up to $600 each in 2011.

90 University of Miami

No. 9 for diversity

IT workers at this university in Coral Gables, Fla., regularly extend their humanitarian reach beyond the school's campus. Over the past few years, IT employees have helped the people of earthquake-ravaged Haiti, and they have supported marine scientists from the university whose research helped guide cleanup efforts after the 2010 Gulf of Mexico oil spill.

NO.

93 Erickson Living

The company supports professional growth and fosters a culture of teamwork. BY MARY K. PRATT

ERICKSON LIVING

» **CIO John Triscoli** with IT staffers Calvin Ho, Hans Keller, Lee Weekley, Elizabeth LaGow, Jeff Hofstetter, Eric Maier and Danielle Junker.

John Triscoli, senior vice president and CIO at Erickson Living, says his company offers the right mix for workers. "There's a great mission to rally around. We have a diverse application set, and IT can have an impact on the business, so the work is very exciting," he says.

Kelley Gurley, a senior business analyst, says that while the Catonsville, Md.-based operator of retirement communities offers good benefits, it's her colleagues who make the company a great place to work. "If there's a hit to be taken, you take it as a team. If someone receives the glory, we all do," she says, adding that Erickson seeks out people who fit into its team culture.

Annual goal-setting, individual development plans and training opportunities help ensure that each employee is moving forward, says Danielle Junker, service manager for enterprise applications. And in addition to formal training, she adds, "there are always interesting projects to work on, so you're always learning about the new technology." ◆

91 Intermountain Healthcare

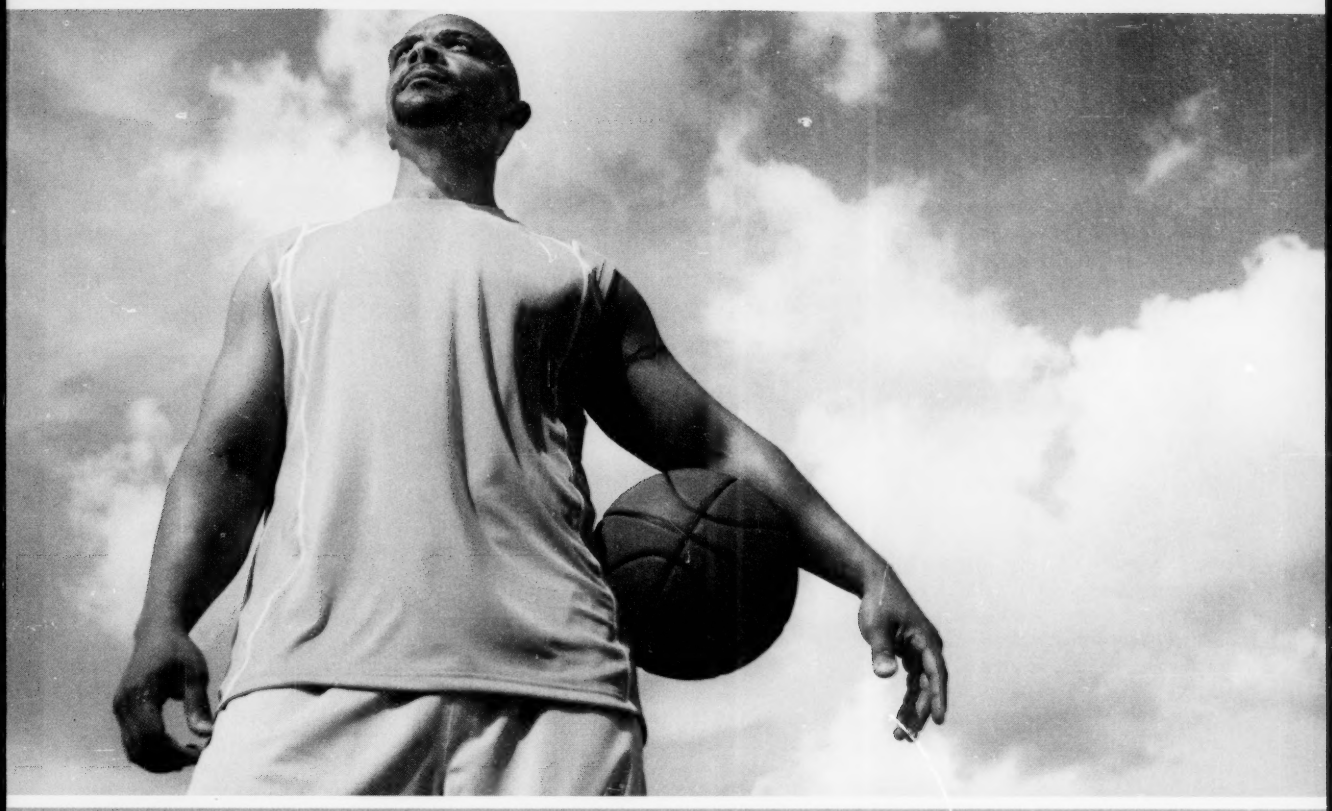
IT promotions: 9%

This not-for-profit health system based in Salt Lake City operates 20 hospitals, and it keeps its IT workers involved in its core mission. IT professionals have the opportunity to work alongside doctors, nurses and clinicians to develop and build clinical software applications. Doctors and nurses are closely involved with all aspects of the software development process, including product planning, user interface design and clinical workflows.

92 Comerica Bank

Women IT managers: 42%

An IT activity committee at this Dallas-based bank holding company is made up of employees who volunteer to host events for their IT colleagues throughout the year. In 2011, the committee hosted a chili cook-off, an ice cream social and a year-end party. IT staffers can take advantage of flexible working arrangements that include telecommuting, flextime, job-sharing and compressed workweeks; 40% of them did so in 2011.



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95 American Water

Women in IT: 24%

In addition to being encouraged to grow in their current roles, IT employees at this water and wastewater utility in Voorhees, N.J., have opportunities to transfer to new positions or other locations across the country. Moreover, the company offers training programs that include courses focusing on both technology and soft skills, such as leadership and communication. Work/life balance benefits include telecommuting and flexible scheduling.

96 Transocean

No. 3 for benefits

This deep-water drilling company, with U.S. headquarters in Houston, maintains a four-and-a-half-day workweek, which includes nine-hour workdays Monday through Thursday and a half-day schedule on Friday. The wellness center is stocked with state-of-the-art fitness equipment and is open to employees at no cost. A defined benefit pension plan is fully funded by the company, and enrollment is automatic for all employees who have completed five years of service.

97 MetroStar Systems

No. 7 for career development, No. 8 for retention, No. 10 for training

At this IT services provider in Reston, Va., each employee gets an individual development plan that includes free training and money to put toward courses, certifications or other career-related pursuits. The company's "MSS University" offers training for all employees, with programs that include complimentary lunch-and-learn sessions.

98 We Energies

Women IT managers: 33%

To promote a healthy workforce, this Milwaukee-based utility, which serves customers in Wisconsin and Michigan, is encouraging all employees to take a health-risk appraisal to learn their blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar/glucose readings. Employees then use their health profiles to create personal action plans to maintain or improve their health. To encourage participation, the company offers employees cash incentives of $200 each.

NO.

94 Avery Dennison Corp.

Challenging work and opportunities to drive business growth keep IT staffers sharp. BY MARY K. PRATT

AVERY DENNISON CORP

» **IT staffers** Susana Tamayo, Rajeev Subbarao, Rob Devers, Ryan Ramirez and Kavitha Nair.

When Rajeev Subbarao joined Avery Dennison a year ago, he welcomed the chance to do a job that had an impact on the business. "What's exciting to me is that I'm getting the opportunity to leverage IT to influence the growth of the company and make IT a true enabler," says Subbarao, an enterprise applications architect at the Pasadena, Calif., maker of adhesive products. He says his managers and peers are all approachable, friendly and open to new ideas.

Avery Dennison emphasizes employee recognition and supports its employees' professional growth through a comprehensive career development program. It also promotes work/life balance with benefits such as summer hours that allow people to leave early on Fridays.

Marie Smith, vice president and IT business partner/materials, says all this contributes to a supportive culture. "It creates an environment where people come together to make things happen," she says. "It is a results-driven organization, but we value relationships." ◆

99 Medtronic Inc.

IT promotions: 13%

An IT Talent Council was recently formed at this Minneapolis-based medical device company, where leadership and short-term development programs provide opportunities for stretch assignments. A full range of health and wellness programs offer employees access to tools, resources and programs to improve their health. Some of the resources include on-site health clubs, wellness coaches, nutritionists, fitness programs and walking/running paths.

100 CHG Healthcare Services

IT promotions: 23%

Employees asked for and received new benefits at this healthcare facilities staffing firm in Salt Lake City. The new offerings include a healthy pregnancy program, a smoking cessation program and an expansion of the company's extended illness/time-off benefit. In 2011, the company introduced a wellness initiative that rewards employees for taking advantage of health programs and events.

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EMPLOYEES BY THE NUMBERS

SOURCE: 33,461 IT EMPLOYEE SURVEY RESPONSES FROM THE 100 BEST PLACES TO WORK IN IT 2012

» WHAT ASPECTS OF YOUR JOB ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU?

Working in an enjoyable environment	94%
Being fairly compensated for the work I do	94%
Having access to training and opportunities that further my skills	89%
Having the means and opportunity to further my career	86%
Working in a challenging environment	81%

» RATE YOUR IT DEPARTMENT MORALE

» WHAT BENEFITS MEAN THE MOST?

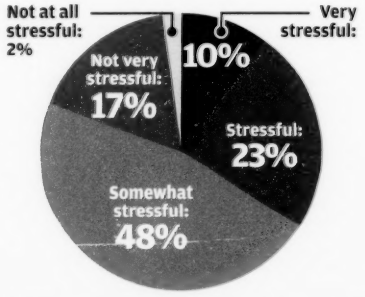
Paid vacation	76%
Health insurance	74%
Profit-sharing/employee stock ownership program/401(k)/403(b) plan	54%
Telecommuting	52%

» RATE YOUR BENEFITS

Percentage of respondents who were very satisfied or satisfied with the following:

Paid vacation	89%
Profit-sharing or employee stock ownership plans	79%
Base salary	78%
Work/life balance	78%
Flexible hours	77%

» RATE YOUR WORKPLACE STRESS LEVEL



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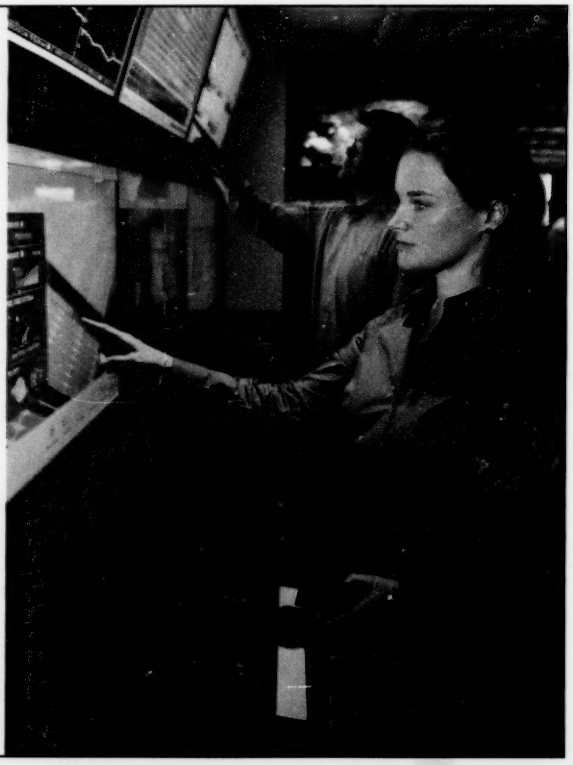

HOW WE CHOSE THE BEST PLACES

FOR THE 19TH YEAR IN A ROW, *Computerworld* conducted a survey to identify the 100 best places to work for IT professionals. We started accepting nominations in June 2011. Participants were asked to provide contact information for an individual at their company who had access to employment statistics, financial data and benefits information for the IT department and the company as a whole.

In January 2012, contacts at 375 nominated companies received a 75-question survey asking about average salary and bonus increases, the percentage of IT staffers promoted, IT staff turnover rates, training and development, and the percentage of women and minorities in IT staff and management positions. Information was also collected on retention efforts; programs for recognizing and rewarding performance; benefits such as flextime, elder care and child care; and policies for reimbursing employees for college tuition and the cost of pursuing certifications. Information from those surveys was used in compiling the 100 company profiles in this issue.

Upon completion of the survey, participants were emailed instructions on selecting a random sample of employees from their U.S.-based full- and part-time IT staffs. All participating companies were required to obtain feedback from their employees. The responses to the employee survey went directly to a third-party research company. Topics covered in the survey included satisfaction with training and development programs, compensation, benefits and work/life balance. In addition, employees were asked to rate employee morale in their IT departments, the importance of various benefits, and their agreement with statements on subjects ranging from career growth to management's fair and equal treatment of employees.

A total of 33,461 IT employees responded to the employee survey from the final 100 organizations selected. The nomination survey, company survey and employee survey were all conducted online. The company and employee survey portion of the research ended in March 2012. To qualify to complete the company survey, participating organizations had to have a minimum of 50 IT employees. Companies based outside the U.S. had to have a minimum of 300 total employees at a U.S. headquarters and a minimum of 50 IT employees in the U.S., and at least 50% of their IT employees had to be based in the U.S.

Approximately half of the total scoring was based on employee responses, with the remaining half based on the survey of the company's benefits and other programs. You can read a complete description of our methodology at **computerworld.com/2012bestplaces.**

This year's survey process was managed by Michele Peoples of IDG Research and Mari Keefe, editorial project manager at *Computerworld*.

POTENTIAL

"The potential for greatness lives within each of us." – Anonymous

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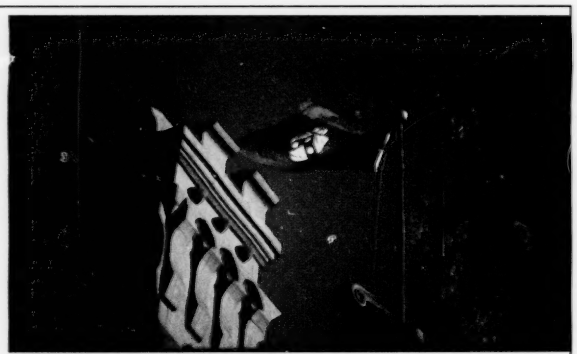

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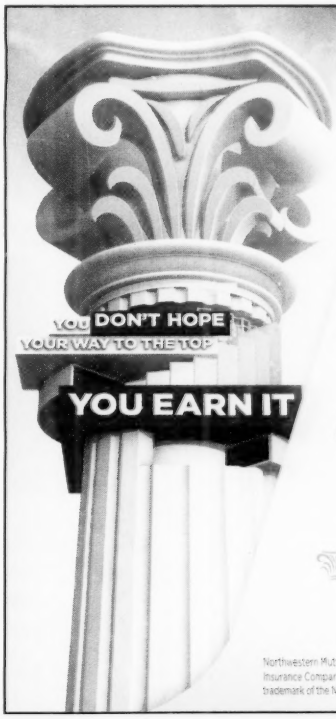

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It Might Be Less Alert

Help desk pilot fish gets a call from a highly placed user. "My secretary just spilled her coffee on the keyboard and now it doesn't work," user says. "What can I do?" Fish gently explains that the most cost-effective option is to get a new keyboard. "Oh," replies user, sounding disappointed. A few minutes later, the phone rings again. It's the same user, this time sounding more optimistic. "Actually," user says, "it was tomato soup. Does that make a difference?"

Don't Bet On It

It's Sunday on a holiday weekend when a UPS in the server room sends an automatic text alert to this IT manager pilot fish: The server room is overheating. "I drive the 10 minutes to work to find the parking lot empty except for one familiar vehicle," says fish. "I go to the server room and determine that the problem is real and begin to shut down unnecessary equipment. Then I call the facility manager to alert him that all office spaces are hot and the problem cannot wait. As I am waiting for the maintenance person to arrive, I drop in on the building's other occupant. A notorious micromanager, the VP of manufacturing is in his office scheduling production, with a fan blowing on his face. When I ask him if he thinks it's hot in here, he replies, 'Yeah, and it was hot yesterday, too.' Sigh. It's a holiday weekend, and this VP is at work sweating in his office, but it did not occur to him to call the problem in to the facility manager – who, of course, reports to this same VP. He would not have gotten the manufacturing schedule done if the file server had fried. Maybe then he would have called?"

Not Quite the Job They Said It Was

Big call center hires this pilot fish to produce reports for management. "I was told that the managers were so busy producing reports that they weren't able to do their main job – managing the agents," fish says. "I was also told that I would be the busiest person in the office because they have so many reports to run that I wouldn't have a minute to spare." So fish goes to work on the problem. After a day of analyzing the requirements, he begins to automate the process of generating the reports. By the end of the week, the reporting process has been automated – it now takes about 15 minutes to run them, and they go out to the managers three times a day. "The managers now have no more excuses for not doing their jobs, and I was praised for my work," says fish. "But what do I do with the just over seven hours left in my workday? I'm reading the Sharkives – and I'm worried about what will happen when I get through the last page in a few weeks."

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SCOT FINNIE

Stuxnet Was a Wake-up Call, But Don't Fall Back Asleep

We haven't even begun to prepare to defend against cyber-espionage and sabotage.

TWO U.S. PRESIDENTS thought sophisticated cyberattacks on an Iranian uranium-enrichment plant were a better bet than alternatives that could lead to war. This isn't the place to debate the politics, but I do want to urge senior IT leaders to pay attention, not just to the release of Stuxnet and its subsequent, unintended escape into the wild, but also to the potential for retaliation that could affect their organizations.

Speaking at a March 2011 TED conference, security consultant Ralph Langner said of the malware that we now know Israel and the U.S. released: "The payload was rocket science; it's way above everything that we have ever seen before."

In September 2010, *Computerworld*'s Gregg Keizer described Stuxnet as a " 'groundbreaking' piece of malware so devious . . . [and] sophisticated . . . that the security researchers who tore it apart" believed it was the work of state-sponsored professionals. They were right.

The revelation that the U.S. and Israel were behind Stuxnet, as first reported June 1 in *The New York Times*, leaves us with troubling questions. Has the U.S. abandoned the moral high ground, inviting potential reprisals from around the world? Have the U.S. and Israel inadvertently delivered the most powerful cyberweapon ever devised to their foes? Should we now expect cyberattacks targeting business, government or infrastructure? And if so, what should organizations prepare for?

Stuxnet's payload was highly customized to a very specific target. The first step was the use of "beacon" malware inserted into Iran's Natanz uranium-enrichment center, reportedly by Israeli agents. David E. Sanger, a reporter for the *Times*, broke the story of the U.S. and Israeli co-creation of Stuxnet. In his book *Confront and Conceal: Obama's Secret Wars and Surprising Use of American Power*, released on June 5, he reports how specific banks of centrifuges were targeted for disruption and damage through the manipulation of their Siemens controllers. The beacon software recorded the normal operation of the controllers and centrifuges, phoning that information home so the development team could focus on areas of vulnerability. Many phishing exploits employ the same technique, perhaps with less sophistication.

A version of Stuxnet is now available for download on the Internet. While it's unlikely that Stuxnet's payload will be directly harnessed and turned against U.S. interests, the history of cybercrime informs us that adaptation and copycatting are undoubtedly well under way.

Langner recently gave his opinion in the *Times*, writing: "While it has been said that Stuxnet was a wake-up call, the only people who woke up were military forces and intelligence services around the globe, along with some terrorists and criminals. Everybody else just fell back to coma, which is puzzling and depressing because protection against cyber weapons is possible." He goes on to argue that the most important threat comes not from nations but from cyberterrorists, against whom military deterrence is powerless.

Now that the world knows about the origins of Stuxnet (and about the origins of the apparently related Duqu and Flame cyber-espionage programs), it's time for U.S. businesses and infrastructure operators to wake up. Few, if any, are safe. The United States may be prepared to wage cyberwar, but it's clear we haven't even begun to prepare to defend against cyber-espionage and sabotage. ◆

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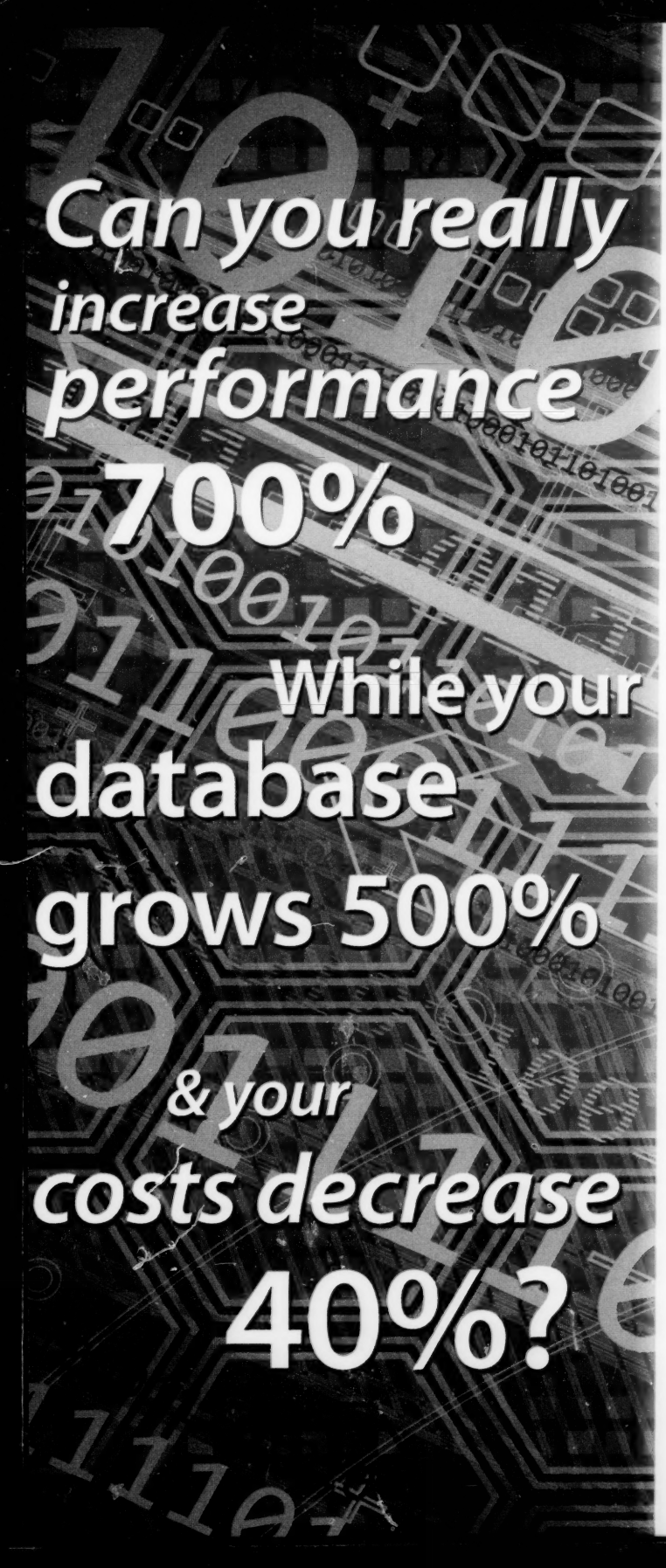

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